the logical gamer

THE MONTHLY HOME VIDEO GAMES REVIEW
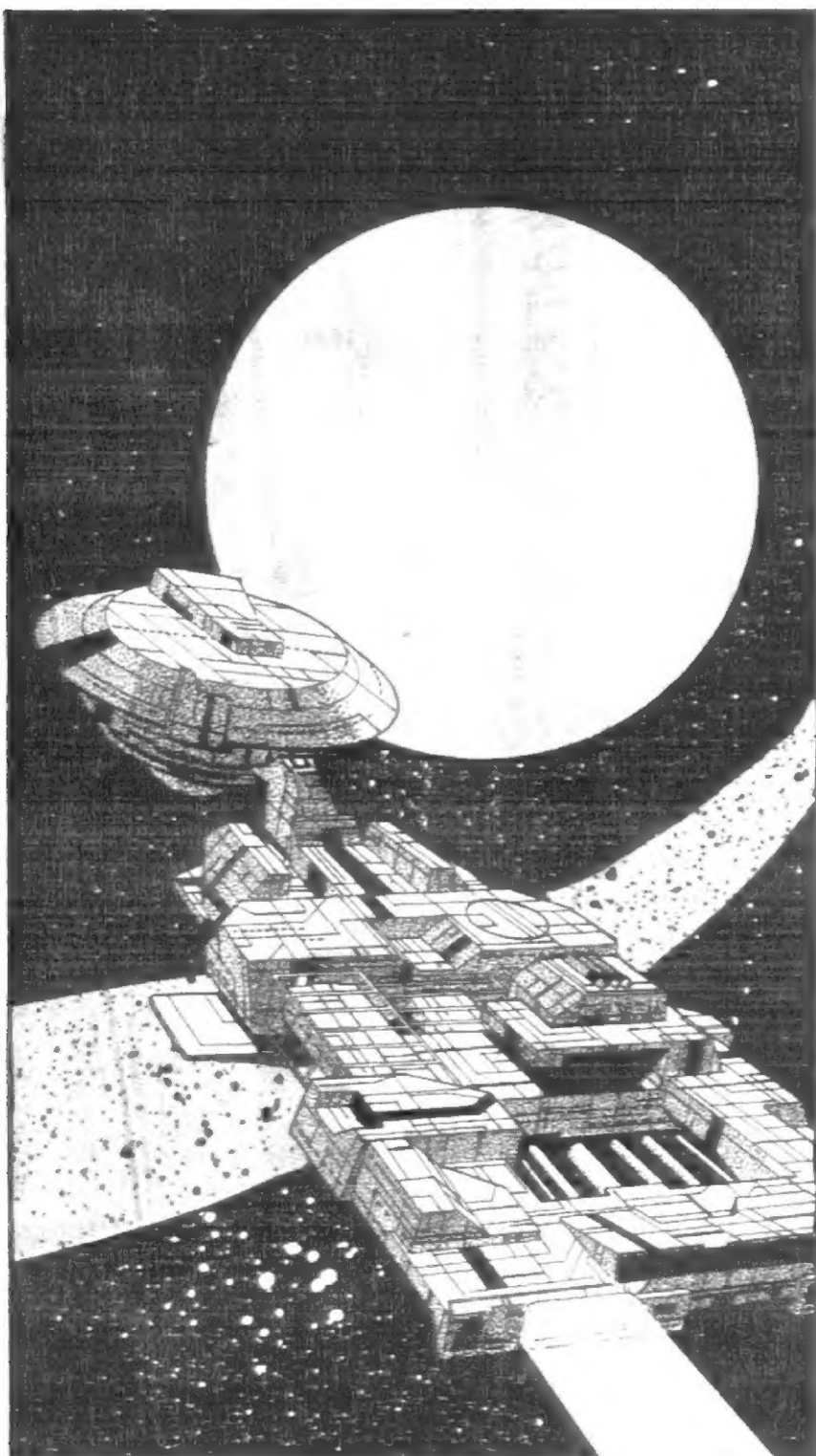
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Activision Announces BEAMRIDER

Activision Incorporated announced September ninth the release of BEAMRIDER, a duel between a solitary light-warrior and legions of radiant enemy starships.

BEAMRIDER, a one to four-player game designed by Dave Rolfe, is the fifth Activision cartridge compatible with Intellivision by Mattel Electronics. It should already be available at retail, carrying a suggested retail price of $34.95.

In BEAMRIDER, a hostile empire has cast a mysterious restrictor shield around the player's planet. It's an unknown light force, 99 sectors deep, a shimmering grid of deep blue beams saturated with strange and lethal weapons. Between the beams is the black emptiness of an impenetrable, other-dimensional void -- and thus the player becomes the Beamrider, a daring, lone ace, piloting a spacecraft born of electromagnetic metals along the azure bars of light. His mission: clear the sectors of the shield and open the doors to space once again.

As the Beamrider moves through his space station's

hyperspace door into the first light-sector, sound warps to an ominous crescendo and enemy starships glimmer in the distance. Then, suddenly sliding along both the vertical and horizontal lightbars, they begin their

assault. The first few probe without firing, and the Beamrider easily picks them off. But this doesn't last long, because soon the humming saucers fire blazing red laser
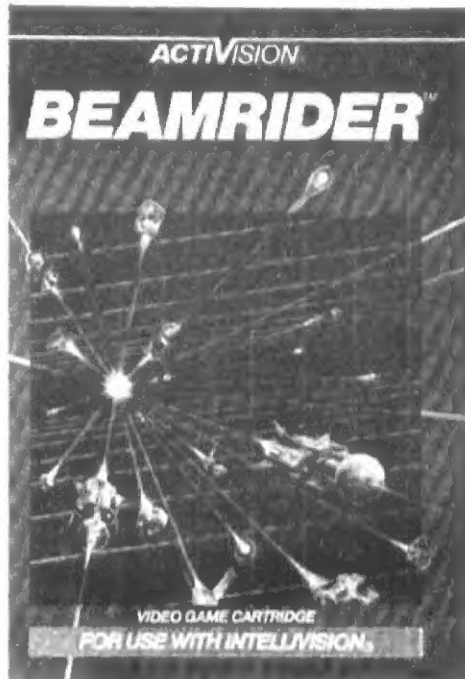
BEAMRIDER, the latest Intellivision game from Activision, is an outer-space blast-em action game that puts the player in a lone ship, warding off ominous alien foes.
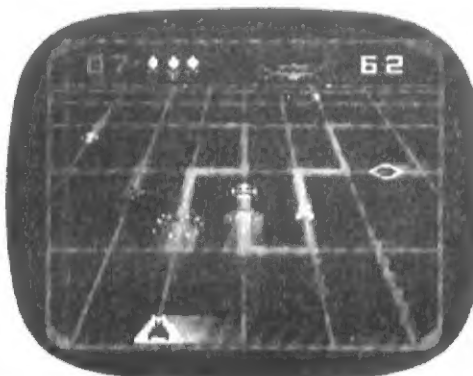
AT&T and Coleco Join Forces

AT&T Consumer Products and Coleco Industries, Incorporated, announced, September 7th, an agreement to develop a joint venture for an interactive game and entertainment service for consumers. Using existing telephone lines and a special AT&T/Coleco modem, consumers owning a home computer or video game system will be able to play the latest in interactive and strategy games, arcade favorites and entertainment software.

"AT&T has been looking for the right partner to enter the existing game and entertainment software market and Coleco is the perfect match. As a proven leader in creative marketing and merchandising, Coleco has continuously demonstrated the ability to produce exciting software for the consumer marketplace. Coleco's expertise coupled with AT&T's research and manufacturing capabilities will produce an outstanding joint business opportunity," said Clarence C. Selin, Director -- Strategic Planning and Consumer Information Products of AT&T.

"AT&T's tremendous resources and extensive consumer base will considerably extend the success of our efforts to deliver top quality entertainment software directly to consumers," said Alfred R. Kahn, Senior Vice President - Marketing of Coleco.

The service will be available on a subscription basis in 1984.

CBS Electronics To Release 5200 Games

CBS Electronics announced last month the September release of seven new games for the Atari 5200 Super System. They include some CBS games previously released in other formats, and some brand new titles, hitting the 5200 first.

In MOUNTAIN KING, the player, as an Explorer equipped with only a flashlight, embarks on a journey through a diamond-laden mountain in search of the elusive Flame Spirit. Mystical musical clues lead the Explorer through the underground maze to this Spirit -- the key that unlocks the ancient Temple wherein sits a priceless Golden Crown. The Explorer

must seize the Golden Crown and race to the top of the mountain before time runs out or the persistent Cave Bats close in to reclaim the Crown. Giant green spiders wait for the Explorer at the lowest level of the magical mount. If he gets trapped in the Spider's sticky web, he has only seconds to escape before a second Spider has him for dinner. The player must concentrate and use all his or her senses -- especially their hearing -- to become Mountain King.

MOUNTAIN KING is a one-player game, also available from CBS Electronics for the Atari 400/800 home computers.

The release of BLUEPRINT

already available for the Atari VCS 2600, was also announced. This version is being billed as "an exact duplicate of the Bally Midway arcade memory game from which it is derived."

Gamers must rely on their memories to save Daisy Damsel from the clutches of Ollie Ogre, who spends all his time chasing her around the neighborhood. Players must remember where the parts of
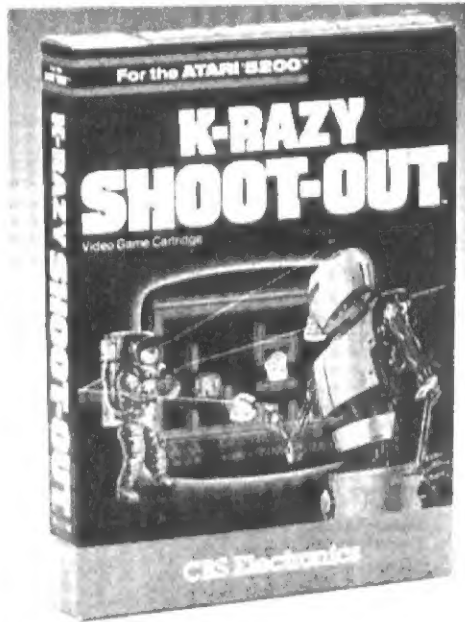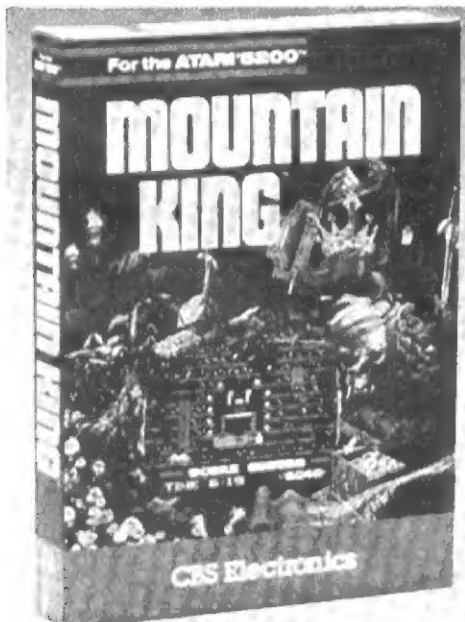
MOUNTAIN KING and K-RAZY SHOOT-OUT are just two of seven new 5200 games coming from CBS Electronics.

IN THIS ISSUE:

THE PURSUIT OF THE PINK PANTHER, WAR ROOM, First From Probe

N.A.P. Consumer Electronics, the original producers of the Odyssey-2 video game system and game cartridges, announced this past June the formation of a new software division, to produce and market games for other video game and computer systems, under the "Probe 2000" brand. Initial products were due to be shipped to retailers in September. **THE PURSUIT OF THE PINK PANTHER**, one of the first new "Probe 2000" games to be released by N.A.P., will be available for the Atari 2600/5200/400/800, ColecoVision, Odyssey-2, Intellivision, TI 99/4A and VIC 20. **WAR ROOM**, designed especially for the ColecoVision game system, is also due to be one of the first "Probe 2000" releases.

In **WAR ROOM**, players are stationed in missile command headquarters. A radar screen shows wave after wave of armed satellites attacking

the player's cities, programmed to detonate in a matter of seconds. From the command post, with a split-screen view of al the action, the gamer controls the defense satellite that can save the cities from destruction.

WAR ROOM is being billed as a representation of the simulated computerized war games the real generals play, "requiring a high degree of strategic as well as hand-eye dexterity skills."

WAR ROOM features split-screen action, showing the targeted region under attack, and a view of the country as seen from the satellite under the player's control. The gamer can direct the satellite to any part of the country and use its lasers to disintegrate enemy satellites. An air raid siren signals the onset of an attack from the enemy satellites - color coded to indicate how much time is left

before they detonate.

The screen will also display the supply of laser fuel, raw materials and food

WAR ROOM, one of the first of N.A.P.'s new "Probe 2000" games, is specially-designed for ColecoVision play.

one nemesis: the frostbitten climate, ice cold, colder than a penguin's kiss.

The game begins with the intrepid Frostbite -- even in parka and snowshoes, no bigger than a penguin -- gazing out across the shifting currents of an arctic sea. Row after row of white ice blocks float by on the frigid waters. The temperature is 45 degrees farenheit and dropping. Frostbite must gather enough blocks to build a cozy igloo, then enter it, before the temperature drops to zero. He does this by hopping effortlessly from floe to floe, "boing-ing" like a spring. Each time Frostbite lands, the white ice turns blue and another block is added to his igloo on the shore.

It's hungry work, so Frostbite grabs raw fish for energy as they swim by. But of course, survival on a frozen tundra is never easy. The crabs and the horrible clams try to push him into the wintry waters. And even the stately birds try to give Frostbite "goose bumps"..by gently nudging him into the icy sea.

The snowpacked shore offers some respite for Frostbite Bailey, but not much, because lurking near the igloo, looking for lunch, is a huge, snarly "Polar Grizzly." If Frostbite wanders too close in the course of his work, the bear lets out a gruesome growl and charges across the tundra. When Frostbite completes an igloo, he must dodge the bear and duck quickly inside.

Of course, the pace gets as intense as the cold. The more igloos Frostbite builds, the more the polar critters take an interest in his work. But if Bailey waits too long -- if the thermometer hits zero degrees -- he turns into something resembling a blueberry pie. Hence his nickname, "Frostbite."

Activision, Incorporated, 2350 Bayshore Frontage Road, Mountain View, CA 94043, (415)960-0410.

aboard the gamer's satellite. To replenish the laser fuel supply, the player must enter a laser-fuel producing city, marked by an atomic symbol.

Upon entering, the gamer

Coleco Signs LAIR

Coleco Industries, Incorporated, and StarCom, Incorporated, have announced the signing of a licensing agreement wherein StarCom has granted Coleco the exclusive, worldwide rights to manufacture home video game and home computer software representing **DRAGON'S LAIR** -- the first fully animated video arcade game.

The announcement was made by Alfred R. Kahn, Senior Vice President - Marketing of Coleco and Douglas Feist, General Counsel for StarCom.

Recognized by the industry as a breakthrough in video game design, **DRAGON'S LAIR** is the first arcade video game to combine advanced computer technology developed by Advanced Microcomputer Systems, with full animation designed by Don Bluth Studios. **DRAGON'S LAIR** utilizes a high resolution laser disc, the game plays like a "participatory movie."

The plot of the three-dimensional **DRAGON'S LAIR** presents Dirk the Daring as a sometimes-clumsy knight who embarks on a quest to save the Princess Daphne from an evil dragon. His course takes him through a huge castle, replete with wicked foes and magical threats.

The scenario is actually controlled by the player, whose skill in directing Dirk's actions determines the sequence, length and the outcome of the "movie" game.

The **DRAGON'S LAIR** video arcade game is manufactured by Cinematronics of El Cajon, California, which began shipments of the coin-op machine to arcades nationally in July, 1983. Within two weeks of its placement, **DRAGON'S LAIR** became the number one arcade game, according to Games People Magazine, August 21, 1983, and has grossed in excess of $14 million to date.

In 1984, Coleco will market the only official **DRAGON'S LAIR** electronic product for home use. The product is expected to have a significant impact on the home electronics/entertainment industry and for reasons of confidentiality the company is not releasing format specifications at this time.

However, in commenting on the agreement, Coleco's Kahn stated, "Our affiliation with StarCom and our licensing program with them is significant as an indication of Coleco's extension into the newest and most exciting areas of advanced technology."

ACTIVISION...
(Continued from Page 1)

bolts down the vertical beams.

The Beamrider dodges by swinging from lightbar to lightbar, all the while hurling his own lariats of laser fire at the agile enemy. When all fifteen enemy craft in the sector have been destroyed, a huge transport -- the "sector sentinel" -- cruises across the top of the beams. The player can destroy it by using one of three solar torpedoes -- but must avoid droves of green, gleaming "blockers" in the process.

At this point the sector is cleared and the player proceeds to the next sector. Occaisonaly, a bright yellow energy-form will slide down a beam through the flurry of saucers. If the Beamrider allows it to melt into his lightcraft, it will generate another "life" for him in the form of a reserve ship.

As the Beamrider progresses through the sectors, the number and type of luminant enemies increase. He dodges blobs of "space debris," yellow "chirper" ships, green "blockers" and "bounce

craft," blue "chargers," orange "trackers," and, finally, red "zig-zag streakers." If the Beamrider can clear the sector of enemy craft, he returns to the other side of the hyperspace door to check his status and prepare for the next challenge.

FROSTBITE is a "surprise" new release, designed by Steve Cartwright. It's an arctic adventure starring Frostbite Bailey, the great (if somewhat diminutive) igloo builder of the North Country. It is compatible with the Atari 2600 Video Computer System and will carry a suggested retail price of $31.95.

In **FROSTBITE**, the player directs the efforts of the legendary Frostbite Bailey, famed architect, as he roams the blue wasteland above the Arctic Circle in search of ice blocks for his igloos. It is a world bounded only by snow and the chilling glow of the midnight sun...a world where peril and polar creatures abound. There are fearsome grizzlies and Alaskan King Crabs. There are low-flying snow geese and the dreaded Killer Clams of the North. But most of all there is Frostbite Bailey's number

In **FROSTBITE**, a new release coming from Activision, VCS players can take on the frozen north, hopping floating blocks of ice to build an igloo and escape the cold.

GAMEVIEWS

The Editor Speaks

by Alan R. Bechtold

Let's Hear it
for the Designers!

We ran our first ballot for Best Games and Designers of the year (we dubbed the awards "Nolan"s, after Nolan Bushnell -- the undisputed father of video games) last month. The ballots are pouring in, and we'll soon have them tallied and the awards properly presented to the winners. We'll be sure to let you know which games, companies and designers won, based on your votes.

As I was preparing our ballot, an argument came up in my own mind about all the categories that should be presented. We wanted to stick with only a few major categories, trying to give awards in each for each system currently popular, so I had to deal with an internal struggle over which categories of gaming most deserved recognition.

The stickler was the award for "Best Designer." It seemed ludicrous to me that I should even have to consider whether to give an award for the best designers for each system or not. After all, authors get awards, directors get awards, actors get awards, all the people associated with virtually all of the arts are routinely recognized, in one way or another, for their work within their chosen fields. So -- why not an award for Best Game Designer?" It seemed it should be one of the first awards that I'd think of giving. It wasn't.

I thought about it, came up with some other categories, considered the idea again, and then, when I was finally beginning to run out of new categories to include, I got to thinking about the reasons why I wouldn't want to offer such an award. There weren't many. In fact, the only valid excuse I could think of was the fact that very few designers receive recognition for their work on copies of the games they've produced!

WHAT'S THE DEAL HERE? I thought. THAT'S NO EXCUSE! So I went ahead and included the category anyway. Some things just have to change!

One of the main reasons behind the current confusion in the marketplace is the over-abundance of poorly-designed games crowding the shelves. Generally, the price of new game software doesn't allow for much random experimentation when it comes to adding new titles to one's library, and it's often hard to tell if a new game is going to be worth the price.

The current glut of mediocre-to-downright-bad cartridges on the market today doesn't bother me, though. 90% of ALL art is junk. Look around at your next record or book shop if you don't believe me. The only difference is that new records and books cost a lot less than new video games -- and publishers of records and books tell us right on the covers who the artists responsible for what you are buying are.

Prices are currently dropping on video game cartridges, but usually only on those that are older and less-popular -- long after thousands have mistakenly purchased them at full retail. Not all good programmers can make every new game they design better than the last, but at least their names on the boxes would help us decide if we want to take a chance on a new title or not.

I tip my hat to those who willingly promote their designers -- companies like Activision, Imagic, 20th Century Fox and Telesys. I implore the others, such as Atari, Intellivision, Coleco -- you know who they are -- to start telling us who their designers are NOW. Anything that can be done to eliminate some of the confusion in the marketplace can only result in increased confidence -- and sales -- in the long run. Besides, only a few designers are currently well-known enough to qualify for a "Nolan" award! This deplorable situation simply MUST change!

SuperVision VCS Game Brain

Supervision, Incorporated, has announced the release this month of The Game Brain, a new mass storage device, for use with the Atari 2600 VCS and any standard cassette tape recorder. The Game Brain will produce a backup copy of the user's compatible game cartridges by adapting (transferring) the game onto a blank cassette tape, for the user's personal archives. The Game Brain also provides a simple method of organizing the user's entire video game collection, thereby enhancing the overall use of the VCS. Versions of The Game Brain for Coleco and Intellivision systems are due for release in early 1984.

The Game Brain is used by simply plugging the unit into the cartridge slot of the VCS and connecting the cable to a standard cassette recorder. By following the directions, the gamer can then generate a backup copy, for use with The Game Brain, in just a matter of seconds. The backup is to be used for archival purposes only. The Game Brain offers video gamers an inexpensive means of insuring against the loss or destruction of the user's game cartridges, each worth $20 to $40.

The Game Brain retails for $98.95. It is currently available through mail order, and dealers are invited to inquire. For more information, contact: SuperVision, Incorporated, P.O. Box 111 #1B, Bristol, CT 06010, (203)582-2651.

Supervision's new VCS Game Brain allows collectors to store a library of games on one audio cassette.

Games Network Set to Go Online in Great Britain

It was announced in Los Angeles August 25, by Thom Keith, Director of International Network Affairs, The Games Network, Inc., that agreement has been reached in principle with W.H. Smith & Son, Ltd., a London-based publisher/retail chain/news distributor, that W.H. Smith will be the exclusive distributor of The Games Network technology and programming to CATV systems throughout the United Kingdom, including the Republic of Ireland.

Details of the pact were not disclosed, however Keith did reveal that the agreements will involve a one-time licensing fee and a continuing royalty plan.

W.H. Smith plans to rely heavily on its nearly 400 book/computer retail outlets in the U.K. to promote The Games Network.

The parties involved co-sponsored a major exhibit of TGN technology and programming at the Cable & Satellite TV Conference International in Birmingham, England September 11-14.

The PAL conversions of the TGN subscriber terminals are planned for delivery in the United Kingdom by the third quarter of '84. This follows closely on the heels of the TGN-planned launch in Canada through its licensee, The Canadian Games Network, in Toronto.

Keith stated that "The look of TGN programming in the United Kingdom will reflect local demand and tastes, i.e. heavy emphasis on educational games and learning programs."

A W.H. Smith spokesman indicated that long-range plans include utilizing The Games Network technology for home shopping and banking, as well as for electronic mail.

SEND US YOUR NEWS!!!

Amiga Introduces ColecoVision Joyboard, New Lower Price

Amiga Corporation introduced August 22 a ColecoVision-compatible version of its popular Joyboard video game controller. Simultaneously, the company announced that the increased demand for its earlier Joyboards for the Atari 2600 and home computers has spawned production efficiencies, resulting in a 20% reduction in retail price. The lower retail price will also apply to the ColecoVision Joyboard.

The Joyboard transfers game play from the hands to the entire body, since gamers stand on the new controller and operate it with foot-preassure, opening up new avenues for play. To compliment the Joyboard, Amiga has also produced a complete line of interactive video games, including skiing, surfing and flying simulation games.

Packaged with the Joyboard is MOGUL MANIAC (reviewed, with the Joyboard, elsewhere in this issue), a first-person skiing/slalom simulation game. Other game titles include SURF'S UP and S.A.C. ALERT. Additional games are currently under development. The new retail price for the Joyboard, with MOGUL MANIAC

will be around $40; additional games will sell for around $20.

The Joyboard can also be used with many of ColecoVision's existing games. When used with "maze-type" games, such as MOUSE TRAP, the Joyboard adds a new control element. Or, a regular handheld ColecoVision controller can be plugged into the Joyboard and used with games requiring that missiles be fired or numbers be pressed in response to screen activity.

Amiga Corporation, 3350 Scott Boulevard, Bldg. #7, Santa Clara, CA 95051.

Amiga's lower-priced Joyboard controller is now available for ColecoVision.

Tiger Annouces New Corporate Name, To Release VCS SPRINGER

It was announced August 24 that the corporate name of Tiger Electronic Toys, Incorporated, has been changed to Tiger Electronics, Incorporated. Tiger Electronics, Incorporated, will operate two divisions: Tigervision and Tiger Electronic Toys.

Tigervision is engaged in the publishing of video game cartridges for personal computers and home video games. Tiger Electronic Toys manufactures and markets electronic games and toys, including handheld games, table top games, electronic learning aids and children's cassette players.

Randy O. Rissman, President of Tiger Electronics, Inc., commented that "the

name change recognizes the natural evolution of our business from strictly electronic toys into many phases of electronic entertainment. I anticipate further growth and expansion of Tiger Electronics, Inc. in other consumer electronic categories, both in the U.S. and Europe."

Tigervision also announced that it will release the game SPRINGER on October 15th. SPRINGER was a very popular Japanese arcade game. It will be released simultaneously for the Atari VCS 2600, Atari 400/800, Commodore VIC 20 and Texas Instruments 99/4A.

Springer is a magical rabbit. The gamer's job is to

---

can collect anything that city produces, but must watch out for spies. If the player comes in contact with the enemy, the city is lost and turns into an enemy launching site!

In addition to defending the cities, the gamer must make sure they have the necessary materials to continue production, so vital to the defense effort. Cities that produce laser fuel, for example, must be supplied with food, raw materials and machinery.

Players score points by disintegrating enemy satellites and collecting supply and laser fuel units. The game ends when there are no cities left to defend, and the screen flashes a farewell

message. The game also sports a pause feature, allowing the player to stop the action and resume play at his or her convenience.

Of PURSUIT OF THE PINK PANTHER, not many details have been revealed. "We plan to take full advantage of the Pink Panther's status as one of the most recognizable animated characters in the world," said Mike Staup, Odyssey's vice president and general manager. "The strength of the name will get the customers in the stores, and the strength of the game will sell the software. Both games should already be reaching retail outlets everywhere.

N.A.P. Consumer Electronics Corp., Interstate 40 and Straw Plains Pike, P.O. Box 6950, Knoxville, TN 37914, (615)521-4316.

IN BRIEF

***Sega, the major arcade manufacturer that recently announced entry in a big way into the home video games market, is slated to be sold by Gulf and Western. Estimates have it that the divestiture will result in write-offs totalling $470 million. Before the announced sale, Sega had a line-up of fifteen games ready to hit the market, but only a few were ever actually released. Gulf and Western is now gearing up their Simon and Schuster software publishing operation, and it is reported that a number of Sega designers will go over to the new venture. No details were revealed as to what will be done with Sega's coin-op division.

***Despite a number of product cancellations at Atari, their planned joint venture with MCA, MCA Studio Games, is still on, according to recent reports. The new venture will bring several movie titles to arcade and home game screens, including the potential use of actual film footage for laserdisc games.

***Rumors still abound in the potential suit by Mattel against Atari, for unfair competition. Mattel's attorney says the suit is still pending. Reports have it, however, that one of the main reasons for the suit -- Atari's plans to bring out Intellivision-compatible game cartridges -- has been eliminated, since rumors have spread that Atari has dropped those plans. Either way, the papers haven't been filed yet.

***Atari has now gone on the record with plans to produce ColecoVision-compatible game cartridges. Products will come from Atari's Atarisoft software publishing operation. Adam computer software may well be in the works, too.

***A recent report has revealed that Coleco has also purchased first option rights to the next laserdisc game from Rick Dyer Industries, the producers of the popular new laserdisc arcade hit, DRAGON'S LAIR. To be previewed in October, the new release is expected to be a superhero space adventure. More should be coming, if plans go well, at the rate of one new release every three months, including live and animated offerings.

***Atari has officially dropped plans to produce "The Graduate," their planned add-on VCS computer keyboard, and one for the 5200, too, although the latter had never been shown before it was cancelled.

***Spectravideo has put their Atari VCS computer add-on on hold, but still plans to bring it out, according to company sources. At this time, the company has tied up all of its manufacturing facilities to produce their new SV-318 home computer system, so their add-on unit and previously-announced cartridges for all video game systems, are having to wait. "With all the competition (for VCS computer add-ons) dropping out," we were told by one source, "why rush?"

***Fox Video Games is still rolling along, according to company President, Frank O'Connell. A lot of Fox's games have been hitting retail at cut-out prices, creating some concern about the well-being of their product line. M*A*S*H has been reportedly selling for less than $6, even though the company claims it is maintaining a wholesale price of $10 on the game. Some of their latest releases have already hit the shelves at Forest Hills Used Video Games in New York. According to O'Connel, Fox Video Games expects to spend a great deal of money setting up such an operation, just like any other long-term investments a studio like 20th Century Fox incurred. Fox plans the release soon of games in computer and ColecoVision formats, and is still adding design staff.

***Ripley's Believe it or Not! will hit TV screens in home video games developed and marketed by Roklan Corporation, for the Atari VCS, Intellivision and ColecoVision, and for Atari, Apple and the Commodore 64 home computers. The games, now under development, expected to be strongly tied to the ABC television series.

***Softsync, already a successful computer software producer, has acquired the designing talents of ex-Atari programmer Christopher Chance. Chance worked on Atari's DIG DUG, for the 400/800 computers, and has been credited with work on CAVERNS OF MARS. He will convert current Softsync programs for use on Atari computers, and offer his own creations. His first original program for Softsync is expected to be called DANCING FEATS. Softsync has also announced an interest in producing products for Coleco, Apple and the new IBM Peanut.

***Interphase, a new software company from Canada, has announced two new titles, BLOCKADE RUNNER and SEWER SAM, for use on Intellivision systems. BLOCKADE RUNNER is written by Norman Dick, and SEWER SAM is by Colin Foster. Both games will sell for a suggested $29.95 each. Versions for ColecoVision, Atari computers and for the Commodore 64 are planned for later in the year.

***Activision has announced that it plans to produce "enhanced" versions of RIVER RAID and KABOOM!, for use on the Atari 5200 system. According to company president and chief executive officer, James H. Levy, "New video game systems and home computers are being introduced with exceptional graphics and game playing capabilities. We intend to introduce a variety of titles for new systems in 1984."

Starcade Game Show Faring Well

Turner Program Services (TPS) Board Chairman Henry Gillespie has reported a 60% clearance of U.S. television households for STARCADE, for the fall season. STARCADE is distributed by TPS, the syndication arm of Turner Broadcasting System, Inc. (TBS).

STARCADE is the first-run syndicated television show that taps into the multi-billion dollar video arcade industry. This season, STARCADE will be the only high-tech show of its kind to be syndicated throughout the U.S. Stations are clearing STARCADE in both weekly strip form and weekend time slots, Gillespie indicated.

Gillespie said that STARCADE has currently been cleared in 40 markets nationwide, including 15 of the top 21. The markets include Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, Boston, Detroit, Cleveland and Dallas (top ten). Gillespie also indicated that TPS is near an agreement in New York to broadcast STARCADE. Other major cities are included.

According to Gillespie, STARCADE was thoroughly tested throughout the **WTBS Universe** from December 1982 to March 1983. Aired once a week on Mondays at 5:35 PM (ET), STARCADE showed a 50% growth in both rating and share during the test period (NTI WTBS Overnights).

"We knew STARCADE had the formula to attract the hard-to-reach young audiences when we reviewed the demographics," Gillespie said. "This test put STARCADE up against some of the strongest strip programming available, yet

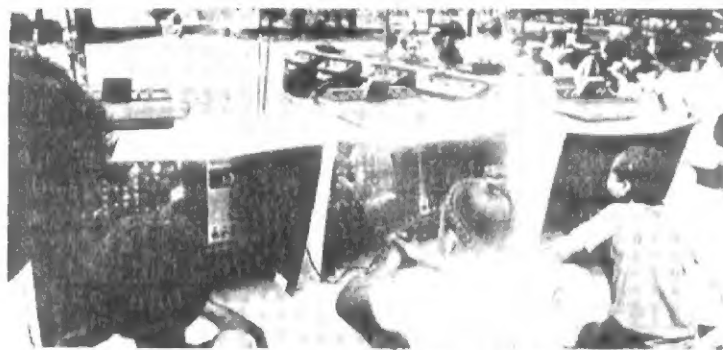the program showed considerable strength despite being aired once a week,"

"We continued to keep track of STARCADE's performances even after the initial test period, paying close attention to how well it fared during its 8:35 AM Saturday time period," Gillespie continued. "From June to July, STARCADE posted a 100% increase in both rating and share (on Saturdays)."

STARCADE emphasises strong production features. Producers James Caruso and Mathis Arthur (JM Production Company, San Francisco) work very closely with the video game manufacturers to constantly update and enhance the program's content. Game action features competition on five of the most current video games in the industry. In this respect, according to Gillespie, STARCADE serves as a national showcase for video game manufacturers and their latest developments in video arcade components.

Headed by veteran game show host Geoff Edwards, STARCADE is taped before a studio audience in San Francisco. The set is designed as a video grid, with a large assortment of video arcade games placed throughout. Two high-rated opponents compete in game action and game quizes to determine who is the master of the games.

STARCADE is an original programming concept by Turner Program Services and JM Production Company, Turner Program Services, Incorporated, 1050 Techwood Dr., NW, Atlanta, GA 30318, (404)898-8168.

Activision Welcomes U.K. Contest Winners

Two winners of the first-ever "U.K. Video Games Pentathlon" visited the San Francisco Bay Area in August to drop in at Activision.

John Barber (left), 13, from Walsall, West Midlands, England, and Andrew Davis (right), 10, from Walshaw, Lancashire, England, defeated some 7,000 other entrants from all over the United Kingdom in competition involving five Activision video games: **STAMPEDE, PITFALL!, STARMASTER, MEGAMANIA** and **CHOPPER COMMAND.** Their reward was an all-expenses-paid holiday in California.

Presenting the visitors with a complete library of Activision games is Activision International's advertising coordinator, Judy Siner.

CBS Electronics Sponsors PAL Contest in Central Park

Some 104 youngsters, all members of the Police Athletic League, met in a contest of endurance and speed Wednesday, August 10, in New York's Central Park. CBS Electronics, sponsors of the contest, donated 13 Atari Video Computer Systems and one of their latest games, **SOLAR FOX**, to the 13 PAL centers who participated in the event. Week-long eliminations resulted in the FACE THE FOX PLAYOFFs, held as part of PAL's Annual Summer Carnival. Thirteen teams of eight master players competed against each other in frantic 10-minute heats for top scores and prizes. The Grand Prize went to 12-year-old Andre Sanders, a member of PAL's Lynch Center at 156th and Beck in the South Bronx.

CBS...

the Contraption are hidden, which houses they've already searched, that Sneaky Pete lives in the Bomb Pit, his one goal in life being a chance to spoil the blueprint, that bombs await in empty houses, that falling flower pots can bounce, that contact with Fuzzy Wuzzy is deadly and, most of all, they must remember that they have only a limited time in which to save Daisy.

The 5200 version of this one- or two-player game is recommended for family or team activity, where one member does the remembering and the other does the maneuvering

K-RAZY SHOOT-OUT is also coming from CBS for the 5200. This is already a popular game for the Atari 400/800 home computers, for one or two players. It is also compatible with the Atari 5200 Track-Ball controller.

The player must save the team of trapped Space Commanders from the vaporization guns of Alien Droids patrolling mysterious Control Sectors. The player must zap them all before time runs out, being careful not to walk into the radioactive walls or the radioactive debris of an exploding Droid. Most of all, the player must constantly keep moving because a Droid may appear anywhere...especially right on top of the Space Commander.

The Control Sectors are created at random, so there are no limits to the shapes of the mazes. But the Alien Droids get faster and smarter each time a higher Sector is entered! **K-RAZY SHOOT-OUT** is an arcade-style lightning-fast game requiring quick reflexes. For one or two players, the game should already be available from retail outlets everywhere.

WIZARD OF WOR is a recreation for 5200 play of the popular Bally Midway arcade

game, for one or two players who enter a dungeon world to do combat as either allies or enemies. Here the player must move through as many as eleven different mazes, blasting Garwors, Burwors and Thorwors, then Worluk and, finally, the Wizard himself, who can teleport himself at will to any spot in the dungeon maze. If the players can eliminate all the Wizard's allies in the first maze, they move on deeper into the dungeon, to the next maze and a new set of enemies. The eleventh maze is dubbed "The Pit," and there is nowhere there for the player to hide.

WIZARD OF WOR is also available from CBS Electronics for the Atari 2600 Video Computer System.

CBS also announced the release of **GORF**, a 5200 version of the Bally Midway arcade game of the same name. A one- or two-player game, it's also available from CBS for the Atari VCS 2600.

CBS Electronics, 41 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10010, (212)481-6400.

TIGERVISION...

help him jump from cloud to cloud and try to reach the sun (at the top of the screen).

Sitting on many clouds are bonus objects which the player can get just by "kicking" them. However, near each bonus is a dragon egg. If the player doesn't get the bonus quickly, the eggs "hatch" into dragons and the gamer is in for a fight. As players pick their paths to the top, it must be selected carefully, because many clouds lead to a dead end.

If the player succeeds in reaching the sun, the action starts again, on a new screen. There are three screens available for VCS play, and ten screens for the computer formats.

Tiger Electronics Inc., 909 Orchard, Mundelein, IL 60060, (312)949-8100.

IMAGIC'S PATRICK RANSIL

by Deborah Wickert

In a beautiful wooded glen, on the outskirts of the sleepy town of Los Gatos, California, the dynamic, growing video game company known as Imagic has taken root and flourished. Patrick Ransil, a 27-year-old bachelor and one of the original founders of the company, took

Imagic co-founder and game designer Patrick Ransil looks happy in his work -- with due reason!

time from his busy schedule to grant this interview to THE LOGICAL GAMER.

LG: IMAGIC shipped its first video games on March 17, 1982. How did the company get started?

PAT: It's a really interesting story - just a quirk of circumstance. Brian Dougherty and Jim Goldberger both worked for Mattel and got the idea to start their own software company making games for the Intellivision. At the same time, Bill Grubb and Dennis Kobel, who had both worked at Atari, were thinking of starting a company to design software for the VCS. The friends got together and thought that combining the product lines would give the company more breadth and stability. They contacted the other five founders - myself from Intel, Rob Fulop and Bob Smith, both game designers at Atari, Gary Kato from Versatek and Dave Durran from Mattel. We incorporated the firm in early June of 1981.

LG: How did you get the name, IMAGIC?

PAT: Actually, our name was thought up by our attorney. It is a combination of magic and imagination, both of which we hoped to put into our product line.

LG: Who is responsible for the eye-catching packaging on your games?

PAT: Our art department is very good at devising the colors and the designs. Jim Goldberger came up with the idea of using silver mylar.

Now, other game companies are using rainbows and some silver packaging. It's very flattering.

LG: You're just 27 years old. How about the other founders?

PAT: We're a young group. Bill Grubb, the president, is in his 30's. So are Dennis and Bob. The rest of us are in our 20's.

LG: What kind of education have you had?

PAT: I graduated from the University of California at Berkeley with a degree in Electrical Engineering/Computer Science. Actually, Gary, Brian, Rob and I were all at Berkeley at the same time. I am looking forward to returning to the academic atmosphere sometime in the future. I really enjoyed the openness and willingness to accept other people's ideas that I found there. I miss that about the academic environment.

LG: What did you do after you graduated?

PAT: I went to work for Intel helping customers understand how to design a micro-processor into a small system. When I got involved with IMAGIC, what we needed was a computer to help us write games. So, I designed "Merlin."

LG: What is "Merlin?"

PAT: "Merlin" is a developmental tool used for doing games for the Intellivision. First, you type the lines of code which has to translate into the graphics on the screen - the movement, the sound, the logic for scoring. Then, you type this code into the computer. It assembles the data and puts it into memory. At this point, you have to trick the game system into thinking that the memory is a cartridge. Then, the system can play the game. That's what "Merlin" does.

LG: Have you designed any IMAGIC games?

PAT: Yes. I designed ATLANTIS for the Mattel system. It was a very interesting project. I added a lot of my own ideas, which made it very different from the VCS version.

LG: How do you go about recruiting your game designers?

PAT: At present, we are running a work co-op program in which students who are not yet finished with their degrees from Berkeley and Cal Tech come to work for us for 6 months. Here, they design a game and then go back to school to finish their degrees. It works very well for the students, because they can get real work experience, they are paid well with a bonus if they get their game done and it shows them what it is really like to be a designer at IMAGIC.

LG: What kind of working hours are maintained by your design staff?

PAT: All 30 of our designers work a lot of hours. The creative effort needed to finish a game takes a real focus. Here at IMAGIC, we have provided a different kind of atmosphere. The design labs are always open and you can find people here at all hours. A lot of designers don't come in until the afternoon and will work through the night. They don't like the distractions of telephones and people running around. Other people have a more classical existence and will work from eight to six. There are no time clocks here. People are self-motivated and enjoy their work.

LG: What is IMAGIC's best selling game?

PAT: DEMON ATTACK by Rob Fulop. SWORDS AND SERPENTS, by Brian Dougherty, also sold

very well.

LG: In your opinion, what makes a good game designer?

PAT: First, they have to have solid technical skills and know assembly language. Basic and Fortran are just too slow and not compact enough. Next, they need an appreciation of what makes a good game. Creativity is very important because it is getting tougher and tougher to find a new area which hasn't been done before. Motivation and desire are great assets. One of our designers, Rick Levine, who did MICROSURGEON and TRUCKIN', was a high school math and English teacher who went back to school for a second degree in Computer Science and became a game designer.

LG: IMAGIC is now making cartridges for the Atari VCS, Intellivision, Odyssey 2, VIC 20 and the Atari 400/800 computers. You plan to also provide games for the Coleco and Texas Instruments systems. Why don't you specialize like some of the other companies?

PAT: Supplying the varied systems gives us a broader base and a more stable business. We can emphasize the products for those systems which are selling well. Also, we can supply many systems with higher quality games.

LG: How do you test your games?

PAT: We have a group of boys and girls who come in after school almost every day. They are bright, inquisitive kids who are really good at picking out things in the games which shouldn't be there. In addition, they are very good players and can get to the more difficult levels of play. It has been a very successful program for us.

LG: IMAGIC puts out a beautiful little magazine

981 University ave

Imagic's headquarters are nestled in a beautiful wooded glen, on the outskirts of Los Gatos.

binaryvisions

HOME VIDEO GAMES REVIEWED

by Alan R. Bechtold and
Mike Wilson

NOTE: THE LOGICAL GAMER's reviews now feature an additional combined rating, covering four important aspects for each cartridge reviewed.

Points covered include Concept, Sound/Graphics, Skill and Interest. Concept is ranked by how new to the *home* video games market the game is, either "new," "familiar" or "too familiar." A familiar arcade game brought to the home front for the first time will still earn a "new" rating. A new twist on a familiar theme will be ranked as "familiar." A familiar theme done with no real improvements or major changes will be ranked as "too familiar."

Graphics and Sound are self-explanatory. These ratings will be based solely upon the reviewers' opinions and will be expressed as "Excellent," "Very Good," "Good," "Fair," and "Poor."

For the Skill rating, the reviewers will carefully consider the amount of skill generally required to play and *enjoy* the game by ranking players according to the amount of general video games experience they have had. These ratings will include "Master," "Graduate," "Student" and "Beginner." A "Beginner" rating is not always bad, since many games are better for the fact that total newcomers can just sit down and start having fun right away.

The Interest rating is possibly the most important. This is based on the length of time both reviewers think the game will be played *often* by the average gamer. Ratings here will run anywhere from "1 Week" to "1 Year," at the reviewers' discretion. Games they both think will simply *not* wear out will achieve a rating of "Infinity." Those which hold absolutely no interest will be ranked as a "Yawn."

The list of four ratings for each new game will be compiled from the *separate* rankings of the two reviewers, combined into one set of averaged ratings. The addition of this system will, it is hoped, better enable our readers to see what we think at a glance. Let us know if you like it!

WELCOME BACK, ATARI! As we explained last issue, we experienced some problems getting review materials from Atari, but those problems have been rectified, and we have several of Atari's newest games ready for review next issue!

POLE POSITION

From Atari, for the Atari 2600 VCS, Sears' Tele-Games, Coleco's Gemini, and other, similarly-compatible systems.

POLE POSITION is a first-person racing game, where the player drives a Grand Prix racer in first a qualifying heat, then in the Grand Prix itself. For one player at a time, the car is maneuvered with the standard joystick controller. The object of the game is to drive the course, through as many laps as possible and in the shortest possible time.

The car is steered to the right or left by pushing the joystick to the right or left. It starts out in low gear (top speed 100 MPH) automatically, and can be shifted to high gear (top speed 200 MPH) by pulling down on the joystick. The red fire button is the brake.

The race is driven on a large oval track, with a long straightaway on one side and a hairpin turn, and a 0.1 Km Radius Turn on the other. The player races against time and other computer-controlled cars.

90 seconds are given each player to finish a lap. In the first lap, however, the player must finish in 73 seconds, to qualify for the race itself. The faster the qualifying lap is run, the better the player's starting position in the Grand Prix race will be, with the coveted Pole Position being the best. Bonus points are awarded to each gamer, based on his or her starting position. The first lap in the correct time, the qualifying lap has

to be driven again and again, until a qualifying time is turned in.

The race itself is four laps long, with points awarded for each car passed during the race, and for every second left on the 90-second lap timer at the end of each lap. If the counter reaches "0" during any lap of the race, the player's car stops at the end of that lap and the race is over. Collisions with other cars don't eliminate the player's racer, but they do take up a lot of valuable time, as the gamer's auto has to pause a moment before it can get started and back on the track. The racer slows a lot every time it hits the shoulders of the track, but this can sometimes be the only way to avoid an even more-costly collision.

OPINIONS:

MIKE: Every home video driving game I've played so far has its strengths and weaknesses, and this game is no different in that respect. Paradoxically, however, POLE POSITION's strengths and weaknesses spring from the same area: the graphics.

I must first point out that when you turn the machine on, the display is striking. In fact, they were much better than I'd expected. Better, even, than those on any other VCS racing game I've seen so far.

Gear   Score   Lap Timer

Speed Line   Race Timer
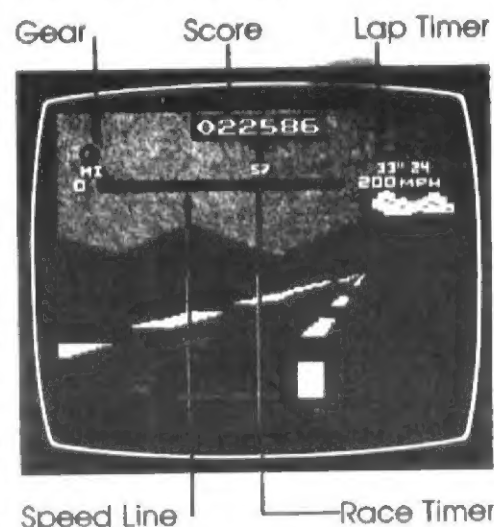
The inherent weakness, also in the graphics, only occurs when the game is in play. Then, the outline of the track and the approaching cars have a tendency to flicker, and this does tend to strain the eyes. It also makes it harder to keep your car on the track.

But -- everything else about this game is of superior quality, the flickering aside. The fact that it's a single-player race, and an all-out effort at beating the timer, rather than just constantly running through lap after lap, hoping to cover more ground with every try, makes it only a more-difficult challenge. In fact, the difficulty of the game is what made me learn to hate it in the arcades -- because it kept eating so many of my quarters!

In short, this game can provide the advanced video racing enthusiast with hours of fun, if the flickering can be tolerated, and would also be fun for groups, since even an entire race doesn't take hours to complete. You might just want to look into it.

ALAN: This is a graphically enchanting VCS racing game. I was also glad to see that, true to the arcade hit after which it was patterned, it's also a good deal different from Activision's ENDURO and from Coleco's proposed VCS TURBO, which are both endurance races, and fine ones, in their own right, but also both requiring as long as half an hour to an hour for a really good gamer to play.

I noticed the flickering on this game, too, and it bothered me as much as it did Mike. Still, as Mike has pointed out, the beauty of the display itself is surprising for the system -- and the race is no less challenging than the one in the arcades.

I liked the way you have to finish in the qualifying lap first to even get into the race -- and that the race itself doesn't take too long to complete. This does make for a better party game, which is what I think this cartridge really is, because just beating your own time tends to get a bit dull after a while. In the end, I'd have to say that you will race your friends with this one for many moons to come, but you probably won't be racing solo often after the first couple of weeks of serious play. If you entertain a lot or otherwise play video games often with a crowd, this is one game you should get.

RATINGS:

Concept: Familiar
Graphics/Sound: Excellent

Difficulty: Student
Interest: Three - Six Months

TUTANKHAM

From Parker Brothers, for the Atari VCS, Sears' Tele-Games, Coleco's Gemini, and other similarly-compatible systems.

TUTANKHAM is a home translation of the Konami arcade original of the same name. It's a maze/chase game for one or two players, using the joystick controllers. The object of the game is to run through a series of four mazes, avoiding contact with a variety of monsters and picking up valuable treasure along the way.

The player maneuvers the archeologist with his or her joystick controller. He walks in whatever direction the joystick is pushed and continues moving in the same direction he is headed, until his direction is changed or he runs into a tunnel wall. The archeologist is armed with a laser gun that can be fired to the left or right by pushing the joystick to the left or right, respectively, and pushing the red fire button at the same time.
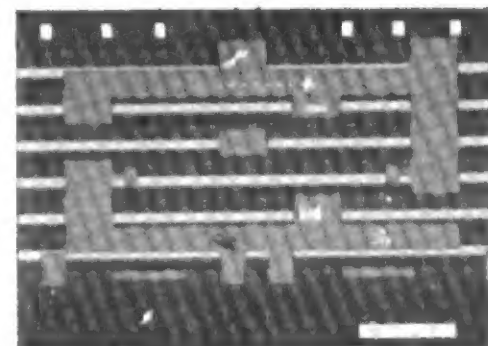
The game is played on four different screens. Each screen is a different chamber of King Tut's Tomb, and is represented by a vertically-scrolling maze.

A number of treasures are scattered around each maze, and can be picked up by the player's archeologist, for extra points. Each chamber also holds a key, which the player must pick up, if he or she is to unlock the door at the end of the maze and enter the next chamber.

There are also a number of secret passageways in each chamber. These allow the player's archeologist to pop from one side of the maze to the other. In many cases, he must pass through a secret passageway to continue running through another section of the maze.

In each chamber, there are also a number of hideouts, from which a variety of different monsters can suddenly leap out and chase the archeologist. The archeologist must either avoid these creatures or eliminate them, be-

cause if he touches one, he'll die.

In chamber one, the player is attacked by Royal Cobra Snakes, Desert Scorpions, and Giant Bats. In chamber 2, he or she is chased by vicious turtles, Jackels and Blue Condors. The third chamber is populated by more snakes, Lion Heads and Killer Moths. Finally, the gamer is greeted in the fourth chamber by Mutant Virus and monkeys -- spirits of the moon god Thoth. The player can blast these creatures with the gun, which only shoots right or left (not up or down) or, in a pinch, he or she can use one of each archeologists' three laser flashes, which will eliminate every enemy creature on the screen, for a few moments, by pushing the joystick up while holding down the fire button.

A timer bar, at the bottom of the screen, displays the amount of ammunition left in the archeologist's gun. The longer a player stays in any one chamber, the faster the ammunition is depleted.

Each gamer starts with three archeologists. The game is played for points, which are earned by picking up treasures, for eliminating creatures and for completing each chamber. There are four game variations available for play on this cartridge, for one or two players at a time, offering starting play that is either easy or hard. Each time all four chambers are completed, the game automatically starts at the next highest level, back at chamber one. The game ends when all of a player's archeologists are lost.

OPINIONS:

ALAN: I like this game. I say this even though I've noticed that **TUTANKHAM** isn't a favorite among some of my fellow reviewers -- Mike included. I can agree, too, that I was a bit disappointed in the graphics here, and found the controllers hard to use (at first), but I still enjoyed the game and have played it often just for fun. I think I will again.

I like the way Parker was able to put four different scrolling mazes on one cartridge. Considering the limits of the VCS's memory, this was a feat in itself. And they weren't super-simplistic mazes, either, and Parker's designers also populated each chamber with a number of extremely challenging creatures, too. Then, they set the action to roll along at a pace that never left me bored while playing. I mean it! This has to be one of the fastest-moving maze shoot-em-up's I've played in a long long time.

The controllers will frustrate everyone who tries this game, however, and that's too bad. The main problem seems to be with learning to fire the gun in one direction while running in the other, and this problem was due more to my own faulty reflexes than to the game program, and

was overcome easily. Then the action started and I was impressed.

I can't rave about **TUTANK-HAM**, mainly because it isn't as fresh and original as it used to be when it was in the arcades, but I still though it was a good fast maze challenge for VCS play, designed for those of us who are addicted to such action. Check it out in the stores. **TUT-ANKHAM** isn't for everyone, but those of you who are into such fun will love it.

MIKE: I wasn't as enthralled with this game as Alan was. I'll admit it: treking into the depths of Tut's cavernous pyramid, looking for treasures and glory, is an interesting concept which promises the kind of excitement that makes a really fine video game a great one. Unfortunately, I didn't think this version of **TUTANKHAM** survived the transition.

The basic concept is as good as it was in the arcades. But, despite the limits of the VCS, I didn't care for the graphics. They too closely resembled something from the dark ages of video game history (about a year ago, in some cases!) for my tastes and, without better graphics, the challenge lacks the zip that could pull it out of the doldrums.

The main concept here is to move through a maze, with various things attacking you while you try to pick up the treasure on the way. This sounds too familiar, if you think about it. And Parker's version of this type of challenge adds nothing new to what's already been done in the field. In fact, as it appears in the VCS format, it actually comes across as a rather poor and clumsy use of the theme.

To be fair, I must point out that my son tended to play the game a lot longer than I did. Maybe this comes from his bent towards Dungeons and Dragons-type games. Personally, I wouldn't put this in that category. It's not even a near-miss, if you ask me.

RATINGS:

Concept: Familiar
Graphics/Sound: Poor - Fair
Difficulty: Student
Interest:
One Week - Three Months

SUPER COBRA

From Parker Brothers, for the Atari VCS, Sears' Tele-Games Video Arcade, Coleco's Gemini, and other similarly-compatible systems.

SUPER COBRA is a VCS home version of the Konami arcade game of the same name, for one player at a time, using the VCS joystick controller. The object of the game is to pilot a Super Cobra helicopter through a variety of skyscraper-filled enemy cities, trying to reach their central base and destroy it.

The player's helicopter is controlled with the joystick. Pushing it up or down makes

the helicopter fly higher or lower. Pushing the joystick left or right will make the helicopter fly slower or speed up. During play, the Super Cobra flies from left to right continuously. The player fires the chopper's guns and drops bombs by pushing on the red fire button. The helicopter fires its guns straight ahead the first time the fire button is pushed, and drops a bomb the second time it's pressed. Only one bomb or bullet can remain onscreen at the same time.

The display is of an enemy skyline, dotted with skyscrapers, hills and gullies. As the player's Super Cobra chopper approaches, numerous fuel depots, rockets and artillery can be seen, dotting the landscape. In some areas, the helicopter must be guided through narrow passages, with obstacles and walls above and below, making the landscape as much of a challenge as the enemy rockets and guns. As he or she flies along, the player must keep an eye on the fuel guage, displayed at the bottom of the screen, and blow up the next nearest enemy fuel depot to fill up the chopper's tanks.

The action continues through eleven sequences, with different terrain, tougher enemy defenses -- and a few surprises along the way. For example, enemy rockets blast off and the anti-aircraft guns fire in later sections. Eleven rectangular blocks, running across the top of the screen, indicate how far the player has progressed through the various sections of the enemy city.
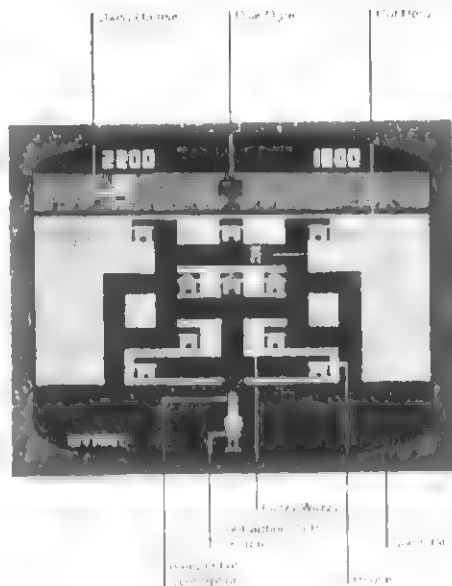
If the player loses a chopper, it starts again at the beginning of the same section the previous helicopter was in. A special feature allows the player to continue in the same section, with the score set back to zero, when all available Super Cobras have been lost in the previous attempt.

The enemy's home base is located at the end of the eleven sections, and must be destroyed, if the player can survive all the hazards and enemy fire, to move on to a more-difficult game.

Players each start out with three Super Cobras in reserve and one on-screen. The play is for points, scored for travelling successfully through each enemy section, for destroying enemy targets, and for wiping out the enemy base. Game variations on the cartridge allow for play at slow, medium and fast speeds. The game ends when all of a player's choppers are lost.

OPINIONS:

MIKE: I never thought the words, "SUPER COBRA," would become a synonym for "slow" and "dull," but this version of the game could make a really good push in that direction. After seeing the job Atari did with their **VANGUARD** for the VCS, I was looking for something that was a little more spectacular from Parker Brothers than this game was. I was disappointed.
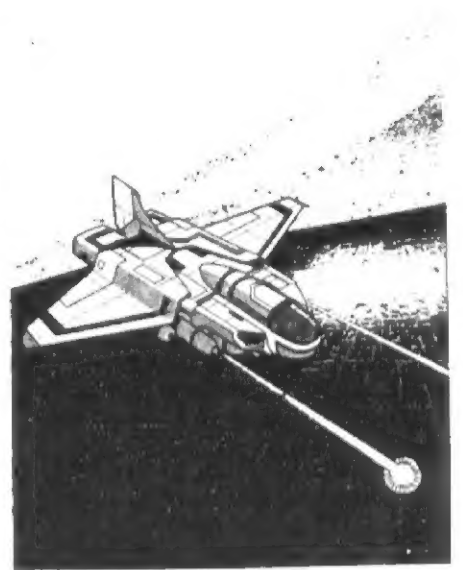
The graphics are fair at best and there's really nothing noteworthy to say about the sound effects that come with the game, either.

But --the main problem I have with this cartridge is the fact that I simply couldn't conjure up the same feeling of speed and urgency that playing **VANGUARD**, gave me, and this is where the game falls on its face.

There were a few things I liked about this game, however. One of them was the fact that you could continue playing, even after losing your last chopper -- just like you could when playing **VANGUARD**, even though I got so bored with **SUPER COBRA** that I could hardly stand it. Still, at least I could see all the levels of play, and things do get really hairy in the more advanced sections of the enemy city.

In the end, my advice has to be to stay away from this game. Even though it does come from good parentage, the offspring leaves a lot to be desired.

ALAN: Again, I am forced to agree with Mike -- in principal. In fact, however, I thought this was a pretty good translation of **SUPER COBRA** for the VCS. Mike's problems with it, I think, started when he compared it to Atari's **VANGUARD**. He should have compared it to other versions of **SUPER COBRA** that are currently available for home play. Unfortunately, the only one I can think of right off was designed for play on Entex's **ADVENTURE-VISION**. It was also, if I remember correctly, one of the better games that ill-fated system had to offer.

Still, as positive as this review has started off sounding, I didn't think **SUPER COBRA** was one of the all-time greatest games I'd ever played in the arcades or on **ADVENTUREVISION**, and I lose interest quickly when playing it on the VCS, too.

Personally, I thought the graphics were pretty well-done on this version. They were actually very close to what was offered in the arcade original, considering the overall limits of the 2600 -- and Parker has done an admirable job of maintaining the overall flavor of the game-play, including all the challenging sections, obstacles and enemy fire a suer-blaster needs -- if

flying through a maze and blasting and bombing away over and over again is your idea of a lot of fun.

What I disliked most was the fact that you had to shoot and drop bombs with the same button. Although I can't think right off of ▪ better way to arrange it for the VCS, this made it difficult to use either of the Super Cobra's weapon to full advantage, and caused me a great deal of frustration until I had practiced quite a while and started to get comfortable with the arrangement.

Overall, I still have to agree with Mike that this game simply doesn't make it any more -- I just feel that way for different reasons. The theme has been reworked to much greater advantage in games like VANGUARD, making the challenge here seem a bit outdated and redundant. I'd have to say it's a good job on a game that maybe should have been retired by now. Unless you simply loved this game in the arcades, I'd say there are better ones out there to spend your money on.

RATINGS:

Concept: Too Familiar
Graphics/Sound: Fair - Good
Difficulty: Graduate
Interest: One - Three Weeks

BLUEPRINT

From CBS Electronics, for the Atari VCS, Sears' Tele-Games Video Arcade, Coleco's Gemini, and other, similarly-compatible systems.

BLUE PRINT is a home adaptation of the original Bally-Midway arcade memory/maze challenge, for one or two players at a time using the joystick controllers. The object of the game is to save a pretty damsel, who is constantly being chased by a menacing meany, with a gun that must first be put together from parts which are scattered out and hidden in a variety of houses. The game is played on two separate displays.

In the first display, Daisy Damsel is constantly chased by Ollie Ogre, on a narrow band across the top of the screen. A maze of streets, with houses at the end of each, fills the middle two-thirds. An unfinished Contraption, the device the player uses in the second phase of game-play to try and do Ollie in, is at the bottom center of the screen. On either side of the Contraption is a "Start" square and the Bomb Pit.

As the game begins, each of the top three pieces of the Contraption travel quickly to three different houses on the display above. The gamer, controlling the hero with the joystick, must move him through the streets and to the houses he or she thinks contain the missing parts, which must be picked up, in their proper order, and placed back on the Con-

traption, before Ollie catches Daisy.

If a house contains the proper piece, the player's hero automatically picks it up. Then he must be led down to the contraption, where the piece will be replaced by merely touching the device. If the wrong piece is picked up, re-entering the house in which it was located will automatically replace it. Houses that don't contain a Contraption piece contain deadly time bombs. If the player's hero picks up a bomb, he must be immediately run down to the Bomb Pit, to defuse it before it blows up. Different-colored bombs have different fuse lengths. When a piece of the Contraption is removed from a house, that house then contains a bomb. As the player's hero runs through the streets, he is constantly plagued by Fuzzy Wuzzy, a strange creature who once loved Daisy. If he ever touches the hero, that hero is lost.

When the Contraption is put together, the player can enter the second phase of play by running his or her hero to the left-hand corner of the screen and touching the "Start" square.

In the second screen, Ollie still chases Daisy relentlessly, getting ever closer, but now the player can slide the Contraption, which has become an activated gun, across the bottom of the screen, firing it up at Ollie by pressing on the red fire button. The bullet travels very slowly unless the player opts to change the gun power level, by giving up some points, and it won't harm Daisy. If the bullet hits Ollie, a letter will be added to a secret password, running along the left-hand side of the screen, and the game will begin again, at a higher level. If Ollie ever catches Daisy in either phase of play, the player loses one hero's life. Hero lives are also lost when a bomb is not defused in time.

Each player starts every game with three hero lives. Points are earned for placing parts on the Contraption's blueprint, for defusing bombs and for shooting Ollie. Special game features include ▪ speed control, which allows the hero to run faster when the red fire button is pressed, as long as his energy is high, and Bonus Time,

earned by completing a contraption and eliminating Ollie without losing a life. The game-screen background changes color to indicate the hero's remaining energy and Bonus Time is added to the time it takes Ollie to catch Daisy in the next level of play. In successively higher levels of play, the gamer must replace first five Contraption pieces, then seven, then even more. The game ends when all of the player's hero's lives are lost. In the two-player version, gamers take turns whenever an opponent loses a life.

OPINIONS:

MIKE: It's hard to know in exactly which category some games belong. BLUE PRINT could classify as ▪ "cute" game or a "maze" game, or even as a "slide-and-shoot," in the second phase, but none of these categories describes this game completely.

The game itself is cute, with the fair maiden running across the top of the screen, trying to get away from Ollie Ogre. Of course, she can never run quite fast enough to accomplish this on her own (it wouldn't be much of a game if she could). But, at this point, the game leaves the "cute" category and enters the "maze" phase, with the player's hero running from house to house, trying to assemble the gun. This is the only part of the game that was really interesting to me, and I had to watch really close to play it well. After that, you move to the "slide-and-shoot" phase, which I thought was a complete waste of time and a real let-down from the maze fun that precedes it.

I guess my problem with this one is trying to decide whether the maze fun included is enough to make it all hold up for a long period of time. At first, I hated the game, and couldn't develop enough interest in it to play it very long, but then I found myself continuing to hit the reset button every time I lost. In the end, however, I don't think BLUE PRINT will have ▪ lot of long-term play potential, even as an old one that you might pick up six months from now and try again, just for fun. It is a good effort, and it comes close, but it still didn't quite make the grade with me.

ALAN: Oh, Mike! You are so hard to please sometimes! The key here is whether or not the home gamer looking at BLUE PRINT likes this sort of game or not. It's as simple as that because, if you ask me, this is an excellent example of its type, for VCS play.

But -- as Mike pointed out above -- which type of game is it? It does contain elements of the categories my colleague has already mentioned, but he forgot one other category, the one in which this game best fits, and of which it is such an excellent example. BLUE PRINT is a memory game. And it's a memory game to beat them all, because of the variety of

play offered, and the amount of memory it takes to play it at the higher levels.

No -- it's not a challenge for every gamer, but I thought this game had just the right amount of maze, action and slide-and-shoot, blended with the overall memory requirements, in the arcade, and found this home version to be ▪ faithful translation. Look into BLUE PRINT if you like to challenge your mind while taking on some all-out wild-action fun at the same time. I've never seen another home game like it. You probably haven't, either.

RATINGS:

Concept: New
Graphics/Sound:
Fair - Very Good
Difficulty:
Student - Graduate
Interest:
One Month - One Year

MINER 2049er (VCS)

From Tigervision, for the Atari VCS, Sears' Tele-Games Video Arcade, Coleco's Gemini, and other, similarly-compatible systems.

MINER 2049er is a VCS version of the world famous computer game of the same name, now also appearing in 5200 and ColecoVision versions, for one player at a time using the joystick controllers. For the benefit of the uninitiated, MINER 2049er is a running, jumping, climbing arcade-style "adventure," where the player must walk Bounty Bob over all of the walkways on every level of each mine-screen, thus collecting all of the ore in each cavern, to pass on to the next one.

Players control Bounty Bob, the hero of this game, with the joystick. He runs left or right when the joystick is pushed to the left or right, and climbs and descends ladders when the joystick is pushed up or down. The player must press the red fire button to make Bounty Bob jump.

The VCS version of this game features three of the ten screens offered on the original computer version: The Slides, The Transporters and The Cannon. In The Slides, the player must walk all the levels, using ladders to climb to higher "floors" of the mine shaft and slides to slide down to lower ones. In The Transporters, the players can use a transporter, (basically an elevator), located in the center of the screen, to move to some of the different levels of the mine. To use the transporter, the player must step Bob into the car, then push up or down on the joystick to make it travel up or down to the higher or lower floors. In The Cannon, the player must pick up the right number of TNT charges and load them into a cannon, then step Bob into the cannon's barrel and shoot him to the upper levels

of the mine. Too much TNT will blast him right out of existence.

In all levels, Bounty Bob is chased by deadly mutants that will eliminate him if they can touch him. These little beasties can be either jumped over or eliminated, but they can only be eliminated when Bounty Bob is "energized." To temporarily energize Bob, the player must make him touch one of the Old Prospector's artifacts that are located in the first two mines. In the third mine, there aren't any old prospector's artifacts scattered around. Thus, the monsters on the last level can't be eliminated -- only avoided.

The player must complete one mine, picking up all the ore there, before moving on to the next one. If a gamer can get past the third mine, the player starts the game over, at the first mine, with more mutants in each screen and no artifacts to help Bounty Bob energize. In the second skill level, it also takes more TNT to shoot Bob farther out of the cannon.

The challenge is a timed one, with a clock counting down to zero as the player makes his or her way through each mine shaft. Points are awarded for picking up each block of uranium ore, eliminating mutants, picking up artifacts and for time remaining on the counter at the completion of each mine. Each player starts with three Bounty Bobs and the game ends when all three have been lost.

OPINIONS:

MIKE: I liked **MINER2049er** for the Atari 5200 and this probably clouded my vision of what I expected of the game for the 2600 (despite the fact that this 2600 version was released first -- we didn't get hold of it until after we'd already reviewed the one for the 5200). Graphically, Tigervision has done a nice enough job of translating the game to the VCS system, even though, of course, they weren't able to bring all the elements of the original game to the limited memory available here.

The main problem with this version, however, was the fact that the game moves too slowly for it to be of much interest to me. Since the game simply couldn't have the same number of screens as the 5200 or ColecoVision versions, I think the overall speed of the game-play should have been stepped up, to give the player more to think about. It might have made this somewhat-sparser version more interesting than it is now.

Still, even with the apparent complaints I have about this game, it also possesses some redeeming qualities that deserve mention. First, the movement of Bob, though slow, is very well-done, and the jumping is much better than what was offered on Coleco's **DONKEY KONG** for the 2600. In fact, this game is just possibly one of the best climbing games that has been produced for 2600 play so far.

Consequently, despite my objections, this is probably one of the best climbing games you can find for this system. You should definitely take a look at it, especially if the VCS is your system of choice. Multiple-system owners would do much better buying one of the advanced-system versions. Unfortunately, Tigervision's VCS translation of this game doesn't hold a candle to those.

ALAN: I agree, in substance, with Mike's points about this game. The movement is too slow, but the graphics are nice and the overall gameplay, despite the fact that it's limited to three different screens, is challenging and engrossing enough to make VCS **MINER 2049er** a worthwhile investment for owners of that system.

I didn't expect too much of the original computer game to survive the translation to the Atari 2600 -- and most of it didn't. But -- the three screens that did get included here are all depicted in graphics that are reasonably close to the original, with an overall challenge that equals it. It's still a fun climbing game, and the addition of the second-level mines makes the total available for play really amount to six. Not too bad. Now I expect to see Tigervision bring out **MINER 2049er II** and **III**, bringing us even more of the great mine challenges from the original game -- and wouldn't blame them if they did.

Like Mike, however, I didn't much care for the way Bounty Bob moved so slow. It reminded me exactly of **KING KONG**, Tigervision's earlier climbing game, one I liked a lot. The difference between the two, however, is the fact that, with **KING KONG**, I didn't know what to expect and was pleasantly surprised. With VCS **MINER 2049er**, the game came with a name that forced me to expect it to be as close to the original as it could be. Although the overall gameplay was similar, the movement of Bob wasn't.

Still, you will get your money's worth out of this cartridge, if climbing games are your cup of tea. It's really a nice effort.

RATINGS:

Concept: Familiar
Graphics/Sound: Good
Difficulty: Student
Interest: One - Three Months

SOLAR STORM

From Imagic, for the Atari VCS, Sears' Tele-Games Video Arcade, Coleco's Gemini and other similarly-compatible systems. Designed by Dennis Koble, with graphics assisted by Michael Becker and Wilfredo Aguilar.

SOLAR STORM is an arcade action game with an outer space theme, for one or two players at a time, using the
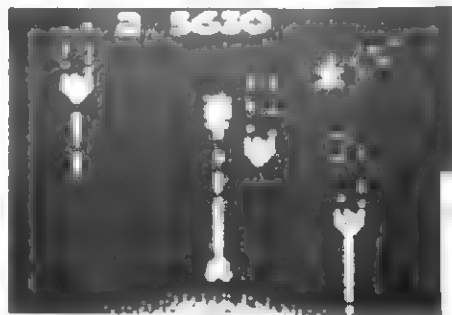
paddle controllers. The object of the game is to maneuver a laser ship back and forth across the bottom of the screen, blasting solar debris before it hits the surface of the gamer's home planet and heats it up to a deadly explosion.

The gamer moves his or her laser ship back and forth across the bottom of the screen by turning the paddle controller knob to the left or right, and fires the ship's lasers by pressing the red fire button. The ship's laser blasts travel almost instantly to the top of the screen, and obliterate everything in their path.

Solar junk, including Deltoid Blasters, Shield Blasters, Solar Flares, Landers, Sun Spots and Sizzloids, start immediately falling from the sky. The Deltoid and Shield Blasters can fire at the player's ship as they descend, but they can only fire once each. The player can blast away at them as many times as he or she desires, until they are either eliminated or they crash to the planet's surface. The more difficult obstacles appear in later waves, and travel ever faster and in increasingly erratic patterns, but the Sizzloids can appear in any wave. Hitting a Sizzloid stops all on-screen action for a brief period of time, and earns the player bonus points. A wave ends when the player eliminates all the solar junk, when all the solar junk has hit the planet's surface, or when the player loses a ship.

Heat indicator bars at each side of the screen show how much solar radiation the player's planet has absorbed. As more and more debris gets past the player's laser ship and hits the surface of the

planet, the heat indicator bars change color and get longer. When they start flashing, the next piece of debris to hit the planet may cause it to overheat and explode. Each target has a different effect on the planet's solar radiation absorption.

At the end of each wave, when a player's score reaches 500, 1000, 1500 points and so on, the action moves into outer space, at the orbital platform. Here, the player mans a moveable gun in the circular platform at the center of the screen. As alien fleet ships pass by below and above, the player aims the platform's guns by turning the controller knob. This moves a spot, the platform's gun-sight, or spotter, around the platform. Pressing the red fire button makes the gun fire at the fleet ships. Gamers earn a bonus laser gun for use in upcoming rounds for every five fleet ships destroyed in this phase of play. Each time a platform

appears during the same game, the player is given less time during which to blast the fleet ships.

OPINIONS:

MIKE: We're awfully late getting around to reviewing this one, and it's partly my fault. Personally, I couldn't believe that this game was as bad as it seemed in the first few hours of play. In fact, I kept telling Alan that I needed more time with this one, because I was just sure there was something that I was missing -- some subtle twist of strategy or outright surprise that I hadn't managed to reach. I simply didn't want to write a review without all the facts. Well, after more than a month of careful research, playing SOLAR STORM over and over again, I didn't come up with much.

Graphically, the game is nothing more than fair. Essentially, it utilizes the same type of graphics that have been available in VCS cartridges produced as long is two years ago. Now, this in itself doesn't make a game bad -- but it can be a good way to start one off on the wrong foot. Imagic didn't disappoint me on this point, either, because they followed up the mediocre graphics with a game that's just as mediocre. By now, regular readers know I'm not overly fond of slide-and-shoot games anyway, but this one doesn't even begin to add anything new or interesting to what's already been done in too many other similar games that have come before it.

If you're looking for a video game that will hold your interest for a long time, this isn't the game for you. If you're looking for a good example of what video games were like in the "prehistoric" era of the field, this one will show you. But you might as well wait. SOLAR STORM is bound to wind up selling at drastically-reduced prices soon.

ALAN: I have to agree wholeheartedly. SOLAR STORM has nothing to offer but a tired theme, an exhausted format, and play that leaves you yawning.

I must admit I liked the laser blasts that streaked out from my ship like lightning when the fire button was pressed, and I found it challenging trying to blast all the various pieces of solar debris -- but so what? It was all too repetitive, and all that boring activity only led to the boring platform sequence and nowhere else. I tired of it quickly.

"No, no and no," I would have to say "no." By all means find yourself another new game for your system. And to Imagic I have to say -- isn't it time you moved on to more challenging themes? Haven't you about milked the slide-and-shoot for all it's worth? Look around you! There are still new and interesting themes to exploit. Work at it and you'll find them. What-

ever you do, please spare us another **SOLAR STORM**! We don't need it.

RATINGS:

Concept: Too Familiar
Graphics/Sound: Fair
Difficulty: Novice
Interest: Yawn - One Day

MOGUL MANIAC
(With Amiga's Joyboard Controller)

From Amiga Corporation, for the Atari VCS, Sears' Tele-Games, Coleco's Gemini, and other similarly-compatible systems.

The JOYBOARD is Amiga's new foot-activated video game controller, specially designed for use with MOGUL MANIAC, but also compatible with other video games. MOGUL MANIAC is the first-person skiing cartridge that comes enclosed with the new peripheral.

Players stand on the JOYBOARD controller, which plugs into the standard joystick port on the VCS, and control on-screen movement by tilting their feet in the desired direction. The JOYBOARD operates in all eight directions, the same as any standard joystick, and also features an extra joystick outlet, into which a standard joystick can be plugged. This allows players to utilize the fire button as well, on games that require it.

MOGUL MANIAC is a first-person skiing game, and comes free with the purchase of a JOYBOARD controller. For one player at a time, it's a race against the clock to the bottom of the hill, reproducing a downhill slalom ski run, as seen through the eyes of the skier.

The display is made up of a number of gates, both open and closed, through which the player must guide his or her skier. Open gates are located side-by-side and closed gates are placed one after the other. The gamer must try to ski between all gates of the same color as the clock keeps track of his or her time.

Standing on the JOYBOARD, the screen moves to the left when the player leans to the right, and moves to the right when the gamer leans to the left. The action can also be set up to work the opposite way, using the Black & White/Color switch. Leaning forward on the JOYBOARD increases the skier's speed, and leaning back slows the skier down. The player's current speed, up to the maximum allowed for each run, is

always displayed on-screen. It is possible to get going too fast and get into a "runaway," with little control over the skis. The game can also be played using any standard joystick controller.

With the difficulty switch set in the "Novice" position, players are docked five seconds for every gate they miss. In the expert mode, they are disqualified for missing any gate, but can still continue the run. Each player is allowed two runs, and is given the best time for the final score. Any number of players may try their luck, but only the best time is continuously displayed.

A total of nine different ski courses are offered on Amiga's MOGUL MANIAC, offering a variety of turns, dotted with 35 to 63 gates.

OPINIONS:

MIKE: Anyone who has visited an arcade in the last few years has probably seen the games where you stand on the skis and race down the slopes. With the JOYBOARD, you can now do it at home, and this new product should be recognized for what it is: a step in the right direction toward bringing the ultimate sports experience right into your living room.

This is the first effort at doing this, and I just hope it's not the best effort that can be made with today's technology. The JOYBOARD itself works well with the game that comes packed inside, but when I tried it on some other cartridges I didn't find the results that impressive. In fact, I found it more of a pain than I care to admit.

As far as the skiing action offered on MOGUL MANIAC went, I found it to be quite an improvement over some of the first skiing cartridges, but still not as good as, say, Activision's TENNIS and Atari's RealSports TENNIS has done. The JOYBOARD did add a new twist to the overall action, but the newness of this device soon wore off and I found myself going back to other games that I could play with a joystick instead. You can also play MOGUL MANIAC with a joystick, but it didn't seem like the game was much of an improvement over other skiing games when played this way.

Graphically, MOGUL MANIAC is very simple, with no major innovations or features of note, so the only thing you're buying is a game you can play with your feet. Right now, I would have to say the JOYBOARD isn't worth the money -- but I said the same thing about Starpath's SuperCharger when it first came out, too and, as more
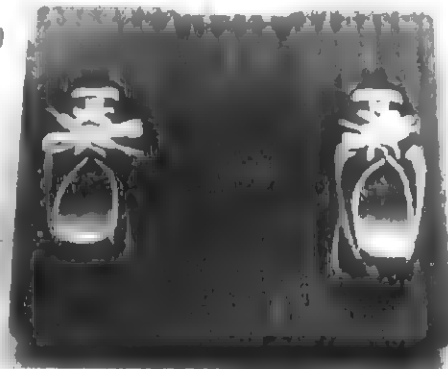
games came out for it, I quickly changed my mind. Maybe this will also happen with the JOYBOARD. Time will tell.

ALAN: I had fun with Amiga's MOGUL MANIAC -- for a while. Though I was ultimately disappointed in the graphics, which are sparse, to put it mildly, I thought the first-person viewpoint added a new dimension to what would otherwise have been too simplistic a challenge to even consider. And I was pleased to see nine different courses offered for play. This variety, and the challenge offered in each course, will keep many a gamer playing this one a lot longer than you might think, just looking at it in the stores.

Still, I think you'll tire of it long before you tire of a lot of the new arcade-style offerings now available, despite the fact that this one will prove to be an excellent party game, simple enough for anyone to give it a try and tough enough to keep anyone playing for at least an evening. In short, if it wasn't included free with the JOYBOARD, I don't think I'd buy it on its own merits.

Included with the JOYBOARD, and considering Amiga's newly-announced lower price for the combination, it might be of interest to some of you. Especially the JOYBOARD. But only for certain, very special applications. MOGUL MANIAC is one of them. Activision's new cartridge, ACTIVISION DECATHALON is another.

Like Mike, I tried playing several other games with the JOYBOARD, of which RIVER RAID and PAC MAN, were the most notable. I found that, while it did add a new twist to almost any game, it didn't really improve my score or hold my interest any longer than the games themselves otherwise would on their own. Then I played THE ACTIVISION DECATHALON with the JOYBOARD and loved it. In this game, you replace the constant wiggle-wiggle-wiggle of the joystick with a realistic running motion on the JOYBOARD and it works very well.

So -- Amiga's new JOYBOARD is an interesting new device that no one needs. Period. It's novel, and it works every bit as well as the manufacturer says it does -- but it's strictly a luxury item that you should only consider buying if you like video game oddities and have the money to spare. Maybe, as Mike has pointed out, there will be some more games from Amiga that utilize the board in such a way as to make it a "must-buy." But it's simply not one yet.

GATES REMAINING — ELAPSED TIME — SPEED
CLOSED GATE — OPEN GATE
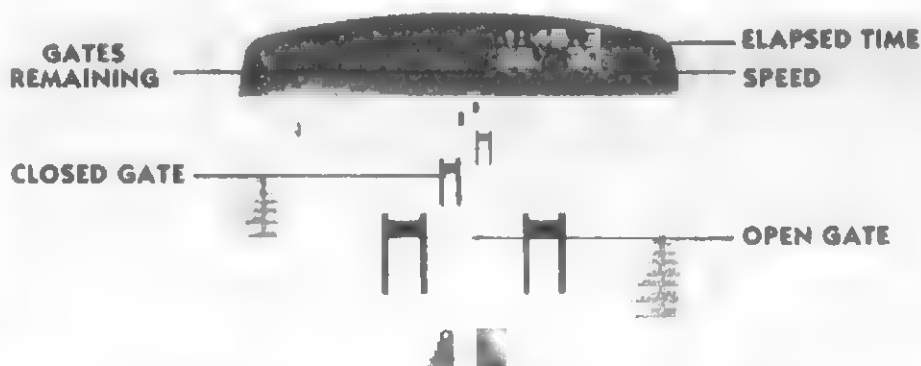
RATINGS:

Concept: Familiar
Graphics/Sound: Poor - Fair
Difficulty: Novice - Student
Interest: One Week

FROGGER (5200)

From Parker Brothers, for the Atari 5200 Super System.

This is the ever-popular classic arcade jumping game, specially designed by Parker Brothers for Atari 5200 play. The player uses the standard 5200 keypad/joystick to jump a frog across a highway, then the river, trying to make it safely back to his home bay.

The player can move the frog with the joystick, or by pressing the appropriate buttons on the keypad. The frog hops once for each time the stick or keypad button is pushed. He can hop in all four directions.

When crossing the highway, the frog must avoid being squished by the cars, or he's a gonner. On the river, he can hop onto the backs of turtles, on logs, or on the backs of alligators, to reach his home bay at the top of the screen.

The turtles surface or dive as they swim through the water. If they go down while the frog is on their backs, that frog is lost. The same thing goes for a frog that jumps on an alligator's mouth, because only the alligators' backs are safe for travel. In the higher levels of play, the autos change directions and travel faster, the logs are farther apart and travelling swifter. Snakes, otters and crocodiles also appear in the upper levels of play, making the river more treacherous.

Each frog's trek is set to a time limit, and the player loses a frog if he isn't hopped home before the timer runs out. A white Lady Frog appears on the logs from time to time, and the player can earn bonus points for touching the Lady Frog while on the way home.

A fly will appear at the five home bays from time to time, earning the player a bonus if the frogger is hopped into the bay before it disappears. Crocodiles also appear in the bays now and then, wiping out a frog if he lands in a home with one still in it.

The play is for points, earned for each movement toward home, for touching the lady frog, for nabbing the bonus flies, and for reaching the home bay. Additional bonus points are awarded for time left on the counter when each frog is hopped home, and for hopping all five frogs to their respective bays. The game moves on to a higher skill level when all the frogs have been hopped home, and the game ends when all the player's frogs have been squished.

OPINIONS:

ALAN: I've always enjoyed a good game of FROGGER, as simple as the game can be, and anxiously awaited it's arrival on the second and third generation video game machines. 5200 FROGGER is everything the arcade game was and more, because you can also elect to play this one with the keypad, if you wish!

Otherwise, the graphics here are just great, the sound effects and arcade tunes are as delightful as they ever were in the arcades and the play is as irresistable as you could ask for. Get FROGGER for the 5200. It's an arcade classic that you will pull out and play time and again, and it's one your friends will play with you for years to come.

MIKE: This is a graphically superior version of the game, and I have to agree that it has all the elements that made the arcade game the major hit that it was. In many respects, it's even better. For one thing, you don't have to keep putting quarters in it to play!

I also liked the fact that you could use the keypad to play, if you wished, though I personally didn't like playing the game that way. I preferred the joystick and think you will, too. But -- at least Parker Brothers gave gamers the option to use either, and for this they should be congratulated. The sound effects are another area in which this game shines, since they have been kept entirely faithful to the arcade original.

There isn't a lot else I can say about this one, since it is everything it claims to be -- an excellent home version of FROGGER. You'll have a lot of fun with this one. I did.
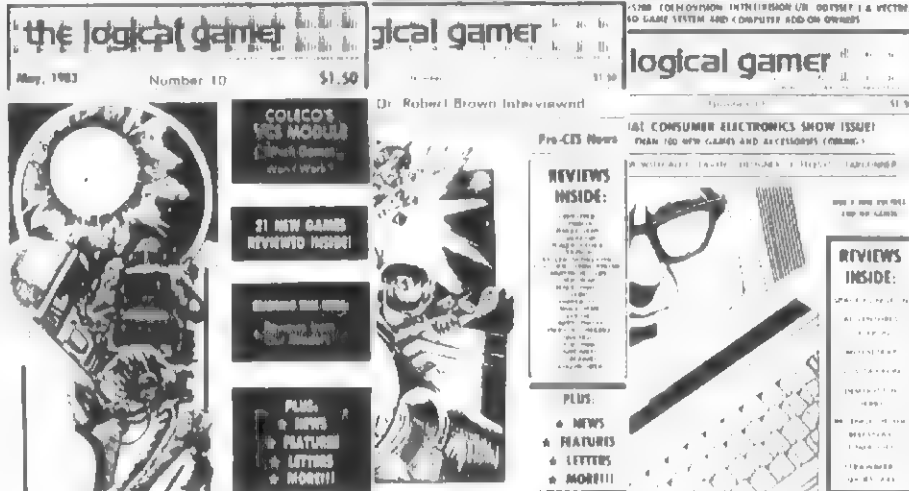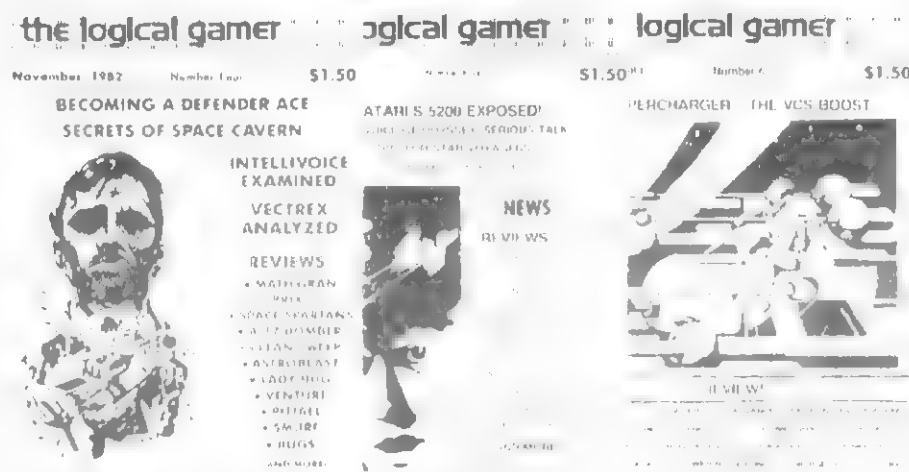
RATINGS:

Concept: Familiar
Graphics/Sound: Excellent
Difficulty:
Beginner - Student
Interest: One Year

FROGGER
(VCS w/SuperCharger)

From Starpath Corporation,

for the Atari VCS, Sears' Tele-Games, Coleco's Gemini, and other similarly-compatible systems that are equipped with a Starpath SuperCharger and any standard cassette recorder.

This is an official translation of the original SEGA arcade hit described above for the 5200 Supersystem, for use with the Atari VCS and Starpath's SuperCharger.

Essentially, all of the game features and graphic displays are the same, except for the ability to use a keypad to maneuver the frog. This game is designed for use with the standard joystick controller.

OPINIONS:

MIKE: There are now a lot of translations of this very popular arcade hit available for home play. Some of them are better than others. This version seems to fall somewhere in the middle. Graphically, it's very good, and the sound effects are the same as those for the arcade original, but you do need to have the SuperCharger unit to play it.

Starpath promised us improved graphics and play when they first brought out their SuperCharger VCS add-on. For the most part, their games for the unit have fallen short of their original announcement. Though their games are all at least pretty good, they simply haven't delivered the incredible graphics they originally promised, giving us little more than what we ordinarily could get on the VCS without a SuperCharger. This game, however, represents a giant leap forward in the attainment of their original goals.

But graphics only show you the game, and they aren't the game itself. This version of FROGGER is true to the original, but it does have a couple of problems that were irritating at times. As you get into the river, for example, the graphics in line with the frog seemed to fade a bit which, when it came to riding the turtles, sometimes made you think they were about to go under when they weren't. That problem, however, was easily corrected by simply paying closer attention to what was going on.

The second problem I noticed was in the joystick response. The game was a little weak in this respect, and it proved to be deadly in all too many cases while I was playing it.

All in all, however, this is a really fine, solid effort from the people at Starpath, and the two minor complaints that I just mentioned shouldn't deter you from getting it for your SuperCharger-equipped VCS.

ALAN: I thought this was a delightful rendition of the Sega classic. In every way.

The graphics here are, as Mike has already pointed out, truly outstanding. They are far better than Parker Brothers managed in their VCS cartridge version of the game, and the gameplay itself seemed to be a little smoother to me, too. I liked Parker's version of the game for the VCS and still do. It's just that, here, owners of the SuperCharger can feel a little smug that now they can buy a superior version of FROGGER for about half the price of the earlier one.

I didn't notice any problem with the turtles, or with the graphics, or with the joystick, for that matter. I don't know for sure, but maybe Mike was hopping on turtles that were rising to the surface, and he mistook their flickering underwater appearances as a flaw in the graphics. Or maybe I was just too wrapped up in the play to see a more-serious flaw. Either way, the problems with this game must be, as Mike later admits, minor indeed. I loved it. It sounds right, looks right and plays right. And it's a lot cheaper than the cartridge versions that are currently available. What else can I say? If you own a SuperCharger, get this game!

RATINGS:

Concept: Familiar
Graphics/Sound: Good
Difficulty: Novice - Student
Interest: One Year

RABBIT TRANSIT

From Starpath Corporation, for use with the Atari VCS, Sears' Tele-Games, Coleco's Gemini, and other similarly-compatible systems, equipped with a Starpath SuperCharger and any standard cassette recorder.

RABBIT TRANSIT is an arcade-style hopping and dodging game, for one or two players at a time, using the standard joystick controller. The object of this multi-screen game is to hop a bunny through a series of trials and tribulations so he can go on to the Bunny Bushes and multiply.

The player maneuvers the rabbit by pushing the joystick in the desired direction. He can only hop at angles, so pushing the joystick straight up, down, left or right has no effect.

In the first screen, the bunny is in the Meadow, sitting at the top of the screen. The river runs across

Present Score
Time Remaining
Number of Chances Remaining
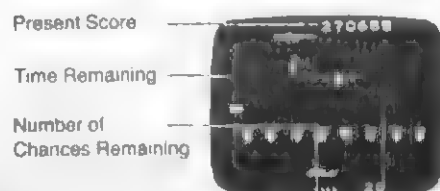
the bottom. In between are any of a number of potential hazards, including snakes, butterflies, choppers and others, which must be dodged or the bunny will perish or be sent back to the top of the screen. Rows of fences and flowers may also appear on the Meadow screen. The rabbit must be hopped around these, or through openings in them, to continue on his way. At the bottom of the screen, the rabbit must be hopped onto a turtle's back, to be carried up the river to the Land of Ledges.

The rabbit starts at the bottom of the screen in the Land of Ledges. This display is made up of a number of ledges that fill most of the TV screen. The rabbit must hop on each of the on-screen ledges, changing their color, to get past this phase. As the rabbit hops from ledge to ledge, a mean man moves across the top, trying to bonk him with a rock. If the rabbit is hit by a falling rock, that bunny is lost. If the rabbit manages to complete the Ledges sequence, a cartoon "intermission" is displayed, where he hops off to the Bunny Bushes, then back onto the screen, with his mate and family behind him. Then the next round of play begins. The intermission sequence can be bypassed, if the player wishes, by pressing the fire button after the Ledges phase of play.

Both major sequences are races against the clock. If the counter reaches zero before a sequence has been completed, that bunny is lost. In higher levels of play, the screen is filled with more hazards in the Meadow, and the mean man moves faster and drops more rocks, which eventually start turning the ledges back to their original color.

Console controls allow for the selection of one- or two-player games, and for skill level settings for each player. In the higher skill setting, the turtle at the bottom of the screen submerges and resurfaces periodically, and all things on-screen move faster. In the easier setting, the turtle is always waiting on the surface.

Points are earned for each successful jump nearer to the turtle, for each ledge changed to its magic color and for time remaining on the counter when the rabbit makes it to the turtle's back. Two players take turns whenever an opponent has lost a bunny. The game is over when all the players' bunnies are gone.

OPINIONS:

ALAN: This is another graphically pretty offering from Starpath, clearly nestled in the "cute" tradition and offering play not unlike that of Q*BERT, in the second phase, and FROGGER in the first. An interesting com-

bination.

I had fun playing this one, too. Although RABBIT TRANSIT appears to be designed to appeal only to children, I was surprised at how long it held my interest as well. Despite the simple format, the challenge rapidly escalates, after the first couple of rounds, into a serious challenge, indeed. As soon as the man starts changing the colors of the ledges with the rocks, it gets nearly impossible to continue before the timer has run out on our poor bunny friend, and it will take the best of arcaders to play far beyond this point without a lot of practice.
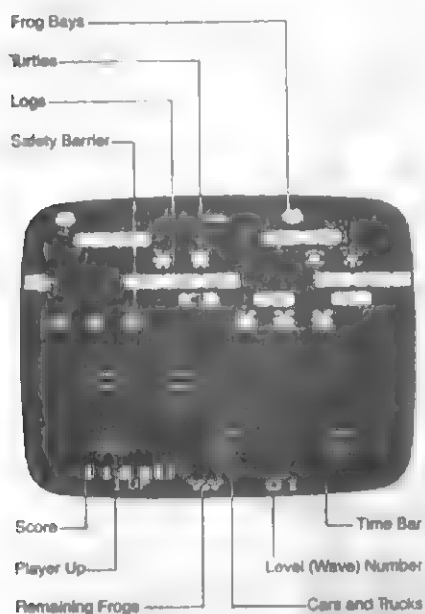
Still, as fun as the game is, I came away from it feeling like there is something missing -- maybe more FROGGER-type arcade tunes (but that would be copying, wouldn't it?), or, possibly, another load, one that moves the game one step farther than what's already been done in the similar games I've mentioned already. Otherwise, RABBIT TRANSIT is fine family fun, especially considering it's a lower-priced SuperCharger cassette, one you should most definitely look into if you've got kids in the house. I like the SuperCharger more with every new game they bring along.

MIKE: Personally, I like animals. I've always found them interesting in the wild as well as in the zoo. However, it's harder to find them quite that interesting in a video game and I'm hoping video game companies will start using something other than animals to try and make a bad game "cute" enough to get by, as has happened with so many in the recent past. It tends to give the entire animal kingdom a bad name.

Starpath's RABBIT TRANSIT doesn't give animals a bad name, but it's not necessarily an outstanding new entry, either. Graphically, it's really good, with a lot of play elements that are similar to Q*BERT, mixed with those of any good dodging game. It seems like such a combination should have been a better game, in the final result, than it was. I'm not even sure why RABBIT TRANSIT doesn't work for me, because there isn't a single bad feature that I can pounce on -- it just doesn't seem to come together.

I usually don't have any trouble finding something wrong with a game I don't like, but this one is different. So -- I'll just have to advise you to look it over carefully before you buy it. It seems to me that this one has the potential of being a really fine game for the right kind of gamer. For myself, however, it just lacked that unknown element that changes a game from something to do into something that is exciting to play. Since this magical factor is different for everyone, you'll just have to decide if it has it for you yourself. But be careful:

Frog Bays
Turtles
Logs
Safety Barrier

Score
Player Up
Remaining Frogs
Time Bar
Level (Wave) Number
Cars and Trucks

things are never what they seem at first glance. I have to give it ▪ maybe.

RATINGS:

Concept: Familiar
Graphics/Sound:
Good - Very Good
Difficulty: Graduate
Interest:
One Week - One Month

Q*bert (VCS)

From Parker Brothers, for the Atari VCS, Sears' Tele-Games, Coleco's Gemini and other, similarly-compatible systems.

Q*BERT is a VCS transla-tion for home play of the popular Gottlieb arcade hit of the same name, for one player at a time using the joystick controllers. The object of the game is to hop Q*bert, the on-screen hero, from one cube to another on a large pyramid of cubes, changing them all to a dif-ferent color.

The player controls the lovable Q*bert, who starts out at the top of the on-screen pyramid. He always jumps on a diagonal, (never in a straight line) when the joystick is pushed up, down, left or right, in the same direction he was last facing. If Q*bert should accidentally jump straight up, he falls back down to certain death. The player also loses a Q*bert whenever he jumps off the pyramid, to the left or right, or off any of the bottom cubes.

The top portion of each cube Q*bert touches changes color. Q*bert's job is to turn all the cubes in the pyramid the same color, to earn bonus points and move on to the next, more difficult pyramid.

Q*bert is chased by sever-al enemies as he tries to complete his task, including Ugh and Wrong Way, who "fall" up and across the cubes, and Coily, a purple ball that changes into a troublesome snake after bouncing all the way down to the bottom of the pyramid. Q*bert's progress is also hampered by colored balls which bounce down the pyramid from the top.

Collisions with some of Q*bert's enemies results in his elimination, in which case he must be replaced by a reserve Q*bert, if any are left in reserve. One of Q*bert's enemies changes the pyramid cubes back to their original color, and is elim-inated if Q*bert touches it.

Q*bert can escape the pur-suit of his enemies by jump-ing off the pyramid onto an awaiting "whirling disk," which will automatically car-ry him away from danger, back to the top of the pyramid. Once a disc has been used, however, it cannot be used again. At the higher skill levels, some pyramids feature as many as four whirling disks, though most have only two.

Each successive pyramid is more difficult than the last. Eventually, each cube-color must be changed twice. Later,

the pyramid itself is invisi-ble, and only the cubes' tops are seen on the display. In another skill level, the cube-tops change colors every time Q*bert touches them, and keep on changing whenever they are touched again, mak-ing it very difficult to turn them all one color. Q*bert's enemies also get more aggres-sive as the skill level climbs.

OPINIONS:

ALAN: This is another popular video game that should soon wind up in most every con-ceivable format. It's already showing up in a variety of computer configurations, and is scheduled for release soon for Intellivision and Atari 5200 play. It's a unique challenge, too. One that de-serves to be made available to all types of gamers.

For the VCS system, the playfield is noticeably re-duced, though the graphics are quite nice. I especially appreciated all the different color combinations as I moved from one skill level to the next, and the computer demon-stration mode, with all the cubes in a constant state of color-flux, is fun to watch all by itself. The sound effects are nothing spectacu-lar -- but they aren't neces-sary, either.

What is special about this game is the play. It keeps you going. I had a little trouble making the joysticks do what I wanted the first few times I tried it, but soon caught on well enough to finish off the first couple of pyramids. Then it took a while to break past that point. This is about the time you realize that the first couple of pyramids are easy compared to the ones that follow. I got wiped out every time I finally made it to the ever-changing cubes, and fig-ure you will, too, until you've played it a lot longer than I have.

Overall, I don't care for the controller action, but it's not an insurmountable problem. I do like the game. Adventure gamers and space blasters will get bored with it rather quickly, but the rest of you should have this game in your collections.

MIKE: Parker Brothers really seems to shine when it comes to translating the best ar-cade games for home play. Q*BERT is another testament to this fact. This is not to say the VCS version of this game doesn't have its prob-lems, but still, over all, it's a another good transla-tion.

The graphics are very good, and the sound effects, though not completely accu-rate, are probably as close to the original as Parker could get within the limits of the VCS. I was particular-ly pleased by the graphics, however, since I was expect-ing a much simpler display for this system.

The central problem with this game, as Alan has al-ready pointed out, is with the controllers. The overall

movement is very limited; so much so, in fact, that I might have given up in frustration after a while and said to heck with it, if it was any game but **Q*BERT**. I liked this one in the arcades, however, so I kept on trying until, after a few hours, I could make the fuzzy hero go where I wanted him to without always jumping off the pyramid or just straight up in the air. Then the merits of this home video game challenge really started to shine. It's one well worth asking for.

So -- take my advice. Don't let early problems with the joysticks dampen your enjoyment of this new Parker Brothers offering. Hang in there and get the feel of it, because it's worth it in the long run. I do hope the movement of our hero is improved when this one comes along in other formats, but I can still give Parker's designers -- whoever they are -- an "A" on this version, too. It's a good solid translation you should own.

RATINGS:

Concept: New
Graphics/Sound:
Good - Very Good
Difficulty: Student
Interest: Nine Months

Q*bert (Intellivision)

From Parker Brothers, for Mattel's Intellivision and Intellivision II Master Component video game systems, Sear's Super Video Arcade, and other similarly-compatible systems.

Q*BERT for Intellivision is the same basic translation of the arcade hit that's been described in the review for the VCS version in this issue, for use with all Mattel-compatible systems, using the standard keypad controller.

OPINIONS:

MIKE: The first thing I noticed about this game was the fact that the disk controllers seemed to make maneuvering Q*bert a smoother operation than it was with the VCS version, and this was a pleasant surprise. I usually expect the same basic controller action in all versions of the same game, but

that's definitely not the case here. The overall movement and play action on this translation are much closer to the arcade version of the game, too, and the graphics are excellent, even by current Intellivision standards.

The whole idea was to bring **Q*BERT** to all home screens, and Parker Brothers has done it in style -- even going so far as to truly adapt the game to each system. And it's the same here as it is in all the versions: if you didn't like this one in the arcades, you won't like it here. If you like the game, however, you'll love having it in your home.

Intellivision owners should be proud to see such a faithful translation for their system of choice. It helps prove the Intellivision II is an excellent video game system with potential as yet untapped. At the price this system is currently selling for, it's a good investment, if you still don't have one.

ALAN: Again I agree, and I have to underline and accent Mike's comment about the controllers on this game. Until I played it, the VCS version was the easiest to control, and took some getting used to. I'm not sure why, but this version was easy to master, even allowing for the fact that I'd already played three other versions first. **Q*BERT** seems to be a good game for Intellivision's disk controllers. If you like **Q*BERT**, get this one for your Intellivision with confidence. It's as good as it gets.

RATINGS:

Concept: Familiar
Graphics/Sound: Excellent
Difficulty:
Student - Graduate
Interest: One Year

Q*bert (ColecoVision)

From Parker Brothers, for Coleco's ColecoVision video game console and ADAM home computer.

This is the ColecoVision version of the recent arcade hit, described in more detail in the VCS version's review this issue. The object and rules are the same as for the VCS version, with some additional features, including a larger pyramid with more cubes, and added beastie-chasing Q*bert.

OPINIONS:

MIKE: There isn't a whole lot more I can say about this cartridge, that I haven't already said in my VCS review. The differences here are the same as you would expect: With the ColecoVision unit's added memory, the graphics are sharper than anything produced so far, and the control of Q*bert himself, though still not as good as I personally would have liked, isn't bad enough to ruin the game, either.

All things considered, this is the closest to the

arcade original that's been done for any system yet. Nothing has been left out that you would miss. It's a good solid game for ColecoVision play, one of the first from an independent software producer. It bodes well for a long life for ColecoVision in what has turned into a very competitive market. With people like Parker Brothers producing games for this system, we'll soon see ColecoVision games like none we've imagined so far. Personally, I'm looking forward to the time when more independents have hit the ColecoVision market. This should make the quality of all the games for the system take a giant leap forward.

Q*BERT, meanwhile, is a super game that you should probably own for yourself.

ALAN: I was only disappointed in the controllability of this game. Everything else was very true to the arcade original, including some graphics that were not only sharp and detailed, but excellently crafted to give the whole pyramid a 3-D feeling. A super job for the home screen.

The problem with the controllers was a tough one for me to overcome, however. The Coleco joystick (and some others I tried) seemed too sensitive to the slightest touch, and didn't always make ol' Q*bert hop in the direction I wanted him to. Considering the additional meanies he must avoid, and the larger pyramid to cover, I lost many a game before I caught the hang of it.

But the joystick problem can be overcome. Just be sure to hold the entire controller pad at an angle, and practice practice practice! The fun you'll have when you do get the hang of it will be worth it long into the night.

RATINGS:

Concept: Familiar
Graphics/Sound: Excellent
Difficulty: Student - Master
Interest: One Year

THE DREADNAUGHT FACTOR

From Activision, for Mattel's Intellivision I and II Master Components, Sears' Super Video Arcade and other, similarly-compatible systems. Designed by Tom Loughry.

THE DREADNAUGHT FACTOR is a space action arcade challenge for one player at a time, using the standard Intellivision controllers. The object of the game is to destroy gigantic alien ships, before they reach the player's Stargate and destroy his or her home planet.

Gamers control a Novaray Hyperfighter space ship in this horizontally-scrolling outer space challenge. Depressing the top of the controller disk makes the ship fly towards the top of the screen. Pressing on the bottom of the disk flies the fighter toward the bottom of the screen. Depressing the

right-hand side of the disk makes the ship fly faster, and pressing the left side makes it fly slower. The Hyperfighter is always travelling from the right to left, even when the disk is not pressed at all. Pressing either top side action button fires the ship's lasers. Pressing either lower side button drops the Hyperfighter's thermal bombs.

As the game begins, the player's home planet is visible filling the entire left-hand side of the screen. His or her Novaray Hyperfighter is docked in the tiny Stargate, just to the right of the planet. On the far right-hand side of the screen, the first enemy dreadnaught, coming in from the distant planet Zorbax, can be seen, lumbering ever closer to the player's home world. To start the action, the player must depress the left-hand side of the disk controller. Once the disk is depressed, the hyperfighter leaves the Stargate, the player's planet disappears from view, and the tiny ship is space-bound in close-up mode, headed for battle with the approaching dreadnaught.

Soon, the giant alien ship comes into full view, at least five times larger than the entire TV screen and studded with deadly defenses of its own. The player's goal, if possible, is to fly over each dreadnaught in the alien fleet and bomb all sixteen of its heat vents, scattered all over the surface -- the only way to destroy the dreadnaught.

There are a total of five different types of dreadnaughts to challenge the player, each with its own shape and arrangement of weapons. Some are triangle-shaped, others are long and narrow, some are wing-shaped and others are shaped like an "O," with a hole in the middle. The triangle-shaped dreadnaught is always first, but, in skill levels that pit the player against more than one dreadnaught, each successive enemy ship is selected totally at random by the computer.

Each alien ship's defenses include vast arrays of small and large laser cannons and missile launchers, heat-seeking missile-launching towers, and silos, from which the planet-destroying salvos are fired. The player must avoid the constant fire from these weapons and destroy them, if possible, then bomb all of the enemy ship's Energy Vents, the one move that will eventually wipe out the dreadnaught. Four engines, at the rear of each dreadnaught, can also be bombed, slowing
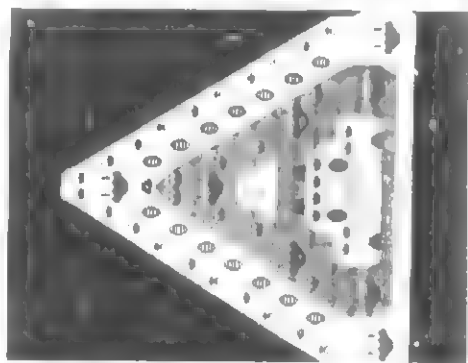
the behemoth ship's advance by 25% for every engine destroyed. Yellow bridges, also on the gigantic ship's surface, can also be blasted with laser fire, reducing the ship's firepower. If the player can eliminate all eight of a dreadnaught's salvo silos, that dreadnaught won't destroy his or her home planet if it reaches the gamer's Stargate, and can then be destroyed at leisure.

Each player starts out with 10 Hyperfighters, which are flown one at a time. When a player's ship is blasted by enemy fire, it is replaced at the Stargate by one in reserve. If a player's ship makes it all the way across a Dreadnaught, it returns to the Stargate for another pass, but the dreadnaught gets closer to the player's planet with every pass. Every ship that succeeds in destroying a dreadnaught is ultimately destroyed in the heat of the blast.

THE DREADNAUGHT FACTOR offers seven different levels of play. Each successively-tougher level offers more dreadnaughts to be overcome. The alien ships also travel toward the player's planet at a faster pace, fire more often and utilize more of each ship's deadly arsenal. At each skill level, every successive alien ship encountered is also tougher to battle than the previous one. Levels one and two are labeled "practice" and "beginners," offering only one dreadnaught in each. Level seven is labeled "impossible," and pits the player against a fleet of 100 enemy ships, all of awesome power. The game is played for points -- and victory over the entire alien fleet, if that is also possible. In each skill level, the player earns a different number of additional bonus hyperfighters -- and bonus points -- for each dreadnaught destroyed. The game ends when the player either defeats all of the alien ships, or when a dreadnaught docks with the Stargate and blasts the player's planet with a missile. If ■ player loses all of his or her ships, the dreadnaught automatically docks with the stargate and finishes the job it set out to do.

OPINIONS:

ALAN: Let me start right off by saying this is far and away one of the best space action games I've ever played on Intellivision, plain and simple. The challenge is one you space-gamers will never tire of taking on (level seven truly is impossible!), and the action is constant. I love it!

The graphics here are very nice, with each alien dreadnaught looking as deadly as anything on your TV possibly could, especially with your tiny ship flying over its massive surface, blasting away with its little bitty lasers at the vast array of weapons below. The sound effects, though sparse, are just what you'd expect in

outer space, too. The "whoosh" of your ship as it leaves the Stargate, and each blast as another alien defense is put out of commission, are all very satisfying and true to the overall gameplay.

I liked the variety that was included, although the game-play itself is simply one of shoot-and-avoid. This is most likely due to the fact that five different dreadnaughts come at you in random order, each demanding a different attack strategy to overcome. This feature -- the different ships coming in random order -- takes this game out of the realm of the ordinary shoot-or-die category, and makes it one of unusual challenge -- a game that's hard to get tired of.

I just love it. That's all there is to it. THE DREADNAUGHT FACTOR is a game you must have. It offers, in its seven different skill levels, something for everyone, regardless of how many times it's been played -- and it will be played often. Get it. You'll be sorry if you don't.

MIKE: Yes -- I have to admit that Alan's right this time. With THE DREADNAUGHT FACTOR, Activision has produced a horizontal slide-and-shoot with real emphasis on the "shoot." I think it's one of the most exciting games produced for Intellivision play to date. The graphics are beautifully done and the variety of ships holds your interest for a long, long time.

As Alan has pointed out, variety is the real key to this game. You constantly have to shoot at something, too, though the game never gets so hard that you think it's impossible to win. There have been a lot of space games for Intellivision lately, but none have really met with a lot of success. This one, however, is definitely worthwhile. In fact, I'm not so sure anyone could ever produce a better space challenge for this system -- though it'll sure be fun watching them try.

THE DREADNAUGHT FACTOR does have one major weak point, however -- the fact that you have to lose a ship in order to destroy the dreadnaught. I've always hated to see the hero die. Also, the game moves a little slow in the lower levels, to the point that is almost seemed ■ waste of memory to put them in at all. The first three levels are good for practice the first couple of times you play the game, but, after that point, you won't go back to them. Not once

you've taken on level four with any success at all.

In short, **THE DREADNAUGHT FACTOR** will provide you with hours and hours of pure fun like you won't find in any Intellivision space game produced so far. If you like this sort of action, this game is an absolute must for you.

RATINGS:

Concept: New
Graphics/Sound: Excellent
Difficulty: Student - Master
Interest: Infinite

SAFECRACKER

From Imagic, for Mattel's Intellivision I and II, Sears' Super Video Arcade, and other similarly-compatible systems.

SAFECRACKER is an original action/strategy simulation, for one player at a time, using the standard Intellivision equipment. The player is a robber who must travel the streets of a city and locate a number of vaults in which are stored the keys to the city's treasury, then break into the treasury's vault and get away with the documents.

The display is a detailed 3-D image of an entire city, with buildings, parks and streets. The player drives his or her car through the streets by pressing on the appropriate side button, turning the car by depressing the controller disc. The car is also breaked by pressing another side button, and fires its guns, ahead or behind, by using more of the side controller buttons.

The player is guided through the city by the color of the screen's border, which changes to one of four colors, indicating the direction in which the car should be headed to reach the next target building. When the target building is found, the gamer must stop his or her car in front, then enter the building, which changes the display to a close-up of the safe inside. The safe's door is closed and a clock begins counting down the time the player has to figure out the combination and open it, to discover one of the keys to opening the vault in the City Treasury.

In the Combination phase of play, the player rotates the safe's dial faster or slower with the controller's side buttons. As all the possible combinations roll by in sequence, the correct one is displayed in red. Once the right combination is spotted, the player must continue rolling the numbers by until it comes up again. If the right combination passes by, all

the possible combinations must be cycled through to get to it again.

If the clock is about to reach zero, and it doesn't look like the player will get to the right combination in time, he or she can just press the "TNT" button on the keypad controller and blow the safe open. This will also reveal the code, but, when the player re-enters his or her car, it will be chased by black police vehicles that chase it down and shoot at it, eliminating one car if they hit it. The player can avoid the cops or shoot them, too, but collisions also eliminate a player's car, so great care must be taken -- and it is often best to avoid using the TNT until the very last moment.

A variety of play options allow for play with cops and other vehicles on the streets at all times, and at faster speeds. The game ends when all of a player's vehicles are gone.

OPINIONS:

ALAN: This is yet another complex Intellivision game from Imagic, with incredibly detailed graphics and a challenge that is hard to master, to say the least. In this offering, the basic objective is simpler and more straightforward than in some of their other recent Intellivision games, but the play itself is still complex.

What I liked was the graphics! They are simply stupendous! But -- a game is not made of graphics alone, and, what pleased me even more was the fact that this game is a GAME, too. Variety of play, however, is where this game is lacking a bit. It's all mainly just a matter of driving the streets and locating the vaults, then opening them and going on to the next one. But -- SAFECRACKER is more exciting than many similar games, too, because just driving the car is itself a challenge -- then dodging the police is tougher -- and dodging the cops while driving through streets filled with other traffic is downright nervewracking: just like it would be in real life.

At times, I thought the car itself was a little bit too difficult to learn to drive, but Imagic's designers have thoughtfully provided a version of the game where there is no traffic or cops, so you have time to learn. Take my word for it -- learning to drive here is as hard and sometimes as frustrating as learning to drive a real car, but the feeling you get when you finally grasp the art of it is also just as satisfying.

In the end, I don't think SAFECRACKER will be a hit, but only because it's another Imagic Intellivision offering that's not for everyone. Still, this is a spectacularly beautiful title in which Imagic has made the most of what the system has to offer. It's a bit lighter on strategy than, say, MICROSURGEON or TRUCKIN', but there's more action. I give Imagic an "A"

for effort and recommend that you check this one out carefully. It might be of special interest to you.

MIKE: I enjoy playing games that are really different, and SAFECRACKER is definitely different. Now, I've never believed that being different makes for a good game, but Imagic has done a good job of doing both here. I agree with Alan that SAFECRACKER won't make it into the Hall of Fame for its overall play alone, but it's a good challenge that deserves your attention.

The graphics are indeed excellent, even by the high standards Imagic has already set, and the sound effects are good, too. The colors, which are sharp and vivid, are the most important aspect of the game, too because they give you the directions you need to get to the various vaults and run away with the game in the end. The colors, however, are also the hardest part of the game to get used to. In fact, I had a lot harder time learning to use them for directions than I did learning to drive the car. But it's worth figuring them out, because this is what can make or break the game for you. They are hard to use, though, so I suggest to start this game at the lowest levels and fully get the hang of turning in the right direction to find the building you're looking for, before moving on to a more difficult level of play.

I also agree that there is less here than meets the eye, when it comes to complexity of the overall play. The problem can stem from the fact that you wind up expecting more from the game than the graphics might imply it can give, and you might wind up disappointed if you don't stick with it a while. My advice is to hang in there. You will quickly learn to appreciate the subtle action and timing that is involved in the play. Don't let Alan mislead you, either: This isn't a game that fast-action arcade game lovers will enjoy. I do think it is just the kind of challenge the Intellivision system was designed to offer, though. A bit slower, possibly, but with subtle action and stupendous graphics. You might have to think about it a while and make sure it's the type of game for you, but it's a job well-done.

RATINGS:

Concept: Original
Graphics/Sound: Excellent
Difficulty: Graduate
Interest: One Year

MR. DO!

From Coleco, for their ColecoVision video game system and Adam home computer.

MR DO! is the ColecoVision home translation of the Universal arcade game of the same name, for one or two players at a time. It's a maze game where the player can make the maze, while being chased by a number of

fast-stepping Bad Guys throughout.

Gamers move Mr. Do through his orchard with the joystick. Mr. Do can walk down any open path or cut through the grass, trying to harvest all the cherries that are scattered all over his on-screen orchard.

As Mr. Do is harvesting, however, a number of Bad Guys keep entering the orchard and trying to chase him down. They'll eliminate Mr. Do if they can catch him. Fortunately, the Bad Guys can only travel down open paths, unless they turn into Diggers, which they have a habit of doing, if they get too anxious to get at him. Diggers can dig their way through the grass to get to Mr. Do.

Mr. Do can fire a Power Ball at all the attackers and falling apples, too, when the player presses either side button. The Power Ball bounces throughout the open paths until it finds a target, but Mr. Do has to wait until it returns before he can fire another one. Sometimes the Power Ball returns quickly and sometimes it takes its own sweet time.

A number of apples are also scattered throughout the orchard. Mr. Do can tunnel up to these and make them drop on Bad Guys below, but he has to be careful -- if an apple drops on Mr. Do, it'll smash him, too. He can also push any apple in his path to the next drop down, to smash Badies below, but they can do the same thing to Mr. Do, if he lets them.

Every now and then, a smashed apple will turn into a sparkling diamond. The player earns 10,000 points and goes to to the next orchard if Mr. Do can grab the diamond before it disappears.

When all the Bad Guys have entered the orchard, they leave a treat behind. If Mr. Do can slip over and grab the treat, all the Bad Guys will stop moving for a while. If an Alpha Monster is over a white letter, at the top of the screen, it enters the maze, along with a bunch of Blue Chompers. The Alpha Monster can only move through the open paths, but the Blue Chompers go everywhere. If Mr. Do can eliminate the Alpha Monster, a letter on its chest is added to the top of the screen. Spelling "Extra" across the top of the screen earns the player an extra Mr. Do. Alpha Monsters also come into the orchard whenever the player earns 10,000 points and hasn't eaten a treat.

There are four skill levels, for one or two players,
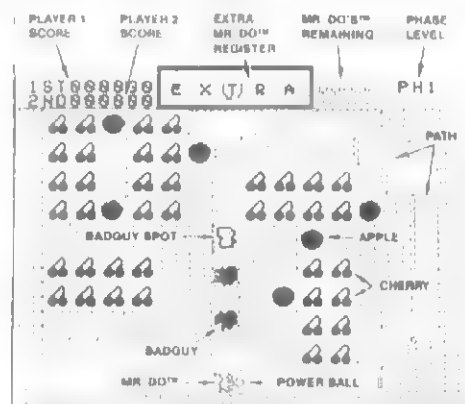
and countless new orchards in which to romp, on Coleco's **MR. DO!** The game advances to a new orchard whenever Mr. Do picks all the cherries, eliminates all the Bad Guys and Diggers on the screen, spells "Extra" across the top of the screen or captures a diamond. The play is for points, earned for grabbing cherries, treats and diamonds, hitting enemies with the power ball or for dropping apples on them. Gamers each begin with five Mr. Do's in the first skill level, and three in the other levels. The game is over when all of a player's Mr. Do's are gone.

OPINIONS:

ALAN: I know there are some weak points in this new Coleco offering, when compared to the arcade version, but I like this game anyway. Everyone I know who has played this game in the arcades thought this **MR. DO!** was interior, but playable. I haven't played this one in the arcade yet, despite several strong suggestions that I should, but I don't care. I've had hours of fun playing this game, getting up to Phase 11 and 12 and struggling, and I think most of you will get your money's-worth out of it, too.

For me, the most obvious weak point here was in the graphics. I don't know what happened, but they appeared to be almost blurred at times, and always indistinct at best. It simply lacked Coleco's usual sharpness. Still, this game did the job, just the same, and I still think enough playability was worked into the game to make up for the picture presented. I've been to Phase 12 play, through many different orchards, and I get a strong feeling that there are countless more to go through. I'll keep working at it until I see them all.

MIKE: Unlike Alan, I've spent countless hours -- and quarters -- in the arcade, trying to reach 200,000 points playing **MR. DO!**, and I'm not that thrilled with this home version of the game. The graphics aren't at all what I had expected. In fact, I thought they were rather poor, for a ColecoVision game. At times, it's difficult to see the apples on the screen because the details are so poorly defined. I know you can't expect an exact duplicate of the arcade game in the home, but I certainly thought Coleco would come a lot closer to it than this.

Other parts of the game are not exactly the same as the arcade version, either. When playing the arcade version, you are given an extra man by spelling the word "Extra," and this is the same in the home version, but the letters don't come out on every orchard like they do in the arcade. The munchers in the arcade version can't munch through the grass like they do in this game, either.

All of this tends to make this version a bit dull in

the long run, though I still had some fun playing it for a while. My disappointment, judging by Alan's response, must be rooted in my hours put in at the arcade. Anyone who isn't used to playing this game there might like it as much as Alan did, but I tend to doubt it. The best I can say at this point is "nice try, Coleco, but, this time, no cigar."

RATINGS:

Concept: New
Graphics/Sound: Fair
Difficulty: Student
Interest: One - Six Months

SUPER ACTION BASEBALL

From Coleco, for use with their ColecoVision video game system and Adam home computer, in conjunction with Coleco's new Super Action Controllers, which come included with the game.

This is full-fledged nine-inning baseball for the ColecoVision game system and Adam home computer, for two players at a time only, using the new Super Action Controllers that come with the game.

The Super Action Controllers feature a full ColecoVision keypad on the top, an arcade-style joystick above the keypad and a speed roller just below the keypad, and four color-coded finger buttons on the pistol-grip handle.

The game is played on two basic screens. During the pitching/batting sequence, the display is a close-up of the batter and pitcher. Three square cut-outs, in the upper right, top center, and upper left of the TV screen, show close-ups of each of the three bases, with the respective basemen and runners on-base, if any.

The gamer controlling the pitcher can first select from four different pitching speeds, on the numbered keypad overlay, then press one of the four buttons on the pistol-grip handle, to select a straight, curve-in, curve-out or knuckleball pitch. This makes the pitcher start his wind-up. The ball can be controlled further, during the pitcher's wind-up, when the player pushes the joystick one way or another before the ball is released. If the stick is moved early in the pitcher's wind-up, the ball tends to go higher. Moving the stick later makes the ball go lower, and it can also be aimed more inside or outside, by moving the stick to the right or left.

The batter swings when the player controlling him moves the joystick in any direction. The on-screen batter swings at about belt-level when the joystick is pushed to the left or right, higher

when the joystick is pushed up, and lower when the joystick is pushed down. An umpire appears in the center of the screen, between the pitcher and batter, and makes the call after every pitch.
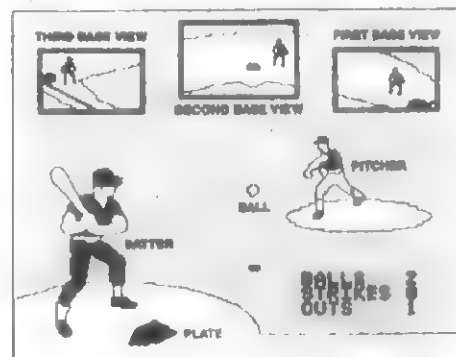
If the batter makes a hit or is walked, the display switches to an overall view of all the bases and the outfield. Batters run around the bases as the gamer spins the speed roller. The four buttons on the pistol grip are used by the defensive team to select which base runners are to continue running and which are to stop at the next base they reach.

Fielders are selected by the defensive player, who presses the top button on the pistol grip to move the first baseman and corresponding outfielder with the joystick, the second button to move the second baseman and corresponding outfielder, and etc. The short stop can be selected for movement with the joystick by pressing the second and third pistol grip buttons at the same time. When a fielder has picked up or caught the ball, he can then throw it to whatever base the player selects, by releasing the pistol grip buttons, then pressing the one corresponding to the base to which he or she wants his or her fielder to throw. The ball is returned to the pitcher by pressing the "Return" button on the keypad. This switches the action back to the close-up display, with any runners on-base displayed

in the appropriate cut-out at the top of the screen.

Buttons on the keypad also allow the offensive player to "steal," slipping any chosen runner off his base during the batting phase of play, and running him to the next one, if the opportunity arises. But -- the defensive player can also press a "pick-off" button, which immediately switches the display to the overall view, so he can toss the ball to any selected base and try to catch a steal in progress.

Available game options include one-player batting practice, fielding practice for one player, two-player pitch-and-bat and two skill levels of full-scale nine-inning baseball, for two players. The computer pitches to the player in the single-player batting practice, and bats random field hits in single-player fielding practice. One player pitches and the other bats in two-player pitch-and-bat. In the first skill level, **SUPER ACTION**

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

BASEBALL is the regulation game for two players. In the second skill level, fielders must catch or pick up balls more accurately, or they can bounce back off.

OPINIONS:

MIKE: The best way for me to review this version of the nation's most popular sport is to compare it to what I consider to be the best video version of it -- Mattel's **MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL** for Intellivision. On the plus side, Coleco's baseball is graphically superior in almost every respect. The close-up display of the batter and pitcher is excellent, allowing for more control of the pitcher. The batter actually has a strike zone that is visible by you and the umpire, too. In addition, the four buttons on the Super Action Controller's pistol-grip allow the player to select from more different pitches than in any other video game version of the sport so far.

With the batter, you have the ability to swing at low pitches as well as high ones, using the joystick. Because of this, it's easier to miss a pitch that is in the strike zone and forces the player to concentrate more on what is going on, rather than just worrying about taking a swing at whatever looks like ■ strike. The game play gets a little complicated as you try to run the bases, having to press more than one pistol-grip button at the same time if there is more than one runner on base, but any confusion that arises at this point of the play is readily corrected with a bit of practice. Personally, I didn't think the speed roller was as responsive as it could have been, and I think this affected my base running a bit. I had also hoped the roller would be ■ bit larger, but nothing is perfect.

Up to this point in the comparison, Coleco's **SUPER ACTION BASEBALL** is superior in every way to the Intellivision version of the game, though there are certain areas where **MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL** still has the edge. In the Coleco game, it's impossible to make a throwing error but, with Intellivision baseball, you can miss catching the ball if you get a bit overanxious. In fact, any complaints I have about this video version of the game come from the way the ball is thrown. It's hard for me to believe that a center fielder can throw the ball from the fence and burn the runner going from third to home every time. With Coleco's video baseball, this is always the case. It's like having the nine bionic men on your team. With Intellivision baseball, you really have to work on the relay throw to get the ball to home plate quicker.

Granted, these complaints are a bit picky, but I'm a great lover of the national pasttime, so I look for the best that is available. As
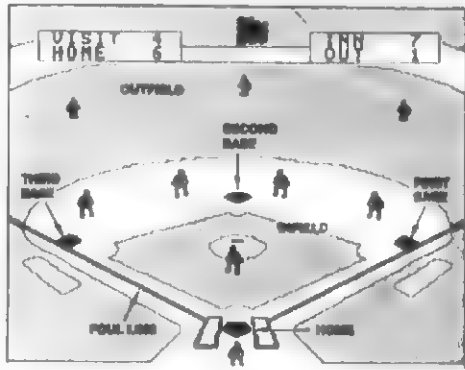
I've already said, this version of the game is better than the Intellivision version, but Coleco should have used some of the best points of the Intellivision game and made their version even better.

For the most part, however, this is a really super game and the practice levels are excellent for training on the skills you need to acquire to play it well. I don't use the word "training" lightly here, either, because that's precisely what you will need to do.

In the end, I'm not sure this is the game that would make me rush out and buy the whole system just to play it, but it's certainly good enough to provide an excellent additional argument for it. You have to buy the controllers to get this game, because it comes packed with them and can't be played without them, but this is no problem as far as I'm concerned, because the Super Action Controllers work realy well on some of Coleco's other games, too, so they don't have to sit idle when you aren't playing baseball.

In short: If you like baseball, this is the game for you. It's not the ultimate video baseball game, but it is the closest anyone has come so far. Good job, Coleco!

ALAN: I have to agree with Mike on this game, on all but one or two points. For one thing, I was disappointed in the general performance of the Super Action Controllers. They work great with the baseball game, but didn't always control the action the way a joystick should in some of Coleco's other games that I tried them with. In **SPACE PANIC**, for example, my on-screen man would often not go up or down a ladder when I needed him too, even though I pushed the joystick in the proper direction. The pistol-grip buttons worked great as fire or jump buttons, but the stick simply didn't make the on-screen characters move all the time. I was a bit disappointed at this.

As for **SUPER ACTION BASEBALL** itself, I think it's simply great, offering players ■ choice of more pitching, batting and fielding options than any other video baseball game I've ever played. I'm not usually much for sports, video or otherwise, but this one keeps me playing for hours on end, loving every minute of the kind of action and strategy only the real thing could offer before now.

I see Mike's point about the throwing being too easy, but, judging by the number of

throwing errors, I made when playing Intellivision's **MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL**, I'd say it only helped improve my score here, so I had no complaints. When you get too good at fielding, just switch to the second skill level. That seems to put enough variation on picking up the ball that always-perfect base throws don't seem to matter too much.

So -- even more than Mike, I think this is the greatest version of video baseball ever. Get it for your Coleco-Vision and you'll see what I mean. The only way it could be better would be if the computer would play a game against a lone player.

RATINGS:

Concept: Familiar
Graphics/Sound: Excellent
Difficulty: Student
Interest: Infinity

STAR CASTLE

From General Consumer Electronics, for their Vectrex Graphic Computer video game system.

STAR CASTLE is an arcade-style space action game for one or two players. Gamers must maneuver their star cruisers around a powerful and deadly alien Energy Cannon. The cannon is protected by three revolving energy shields. Players must try to penetrate the walls and destroy the cannon with their laser cannons.

Each gamer starts with five space cruisers, one on-screen and four in reserve. Cruisers fly in the direction they are pointed when the player presses the "thrust" button on the Vectrex control panel. The ship's course can be changed when the player presses either button one or button two, or pushes the joystick in the desired direction. Button Four activates the cruiser's lasers in bursts of four. No more than four blasts can be on-screen at the same time. The Energy cannon is located in the center of the screen, with three octagonal protective shields rotating around it. The inner and outer shields rotate in the same direction and the inner shield rotates in the opposite direction. To eliminate the shield, the player has to hit each section twice with laser fire from his or her cruiser, creating holes through which the gamer can blast the Energy Cannon. But -- the energy shields shoot their own Energy Bombs at the player's ship. These will track the player's ship and blow it up if they can catch it and make contact. When an outer cannon shield is completely eliminated, the inner shields automatically expand to take its place, and a new shield surrounds the cannon.

The cannon itself always tracks the player's ship, waiting for a break in the shields. Whenever three openings in all the energy rings line up, the enemy cannon can instantly blast a fireball at

the player's ship and eliminate it -- if the gamer isn't fast enough to avoid it or blast it with his or her lasers.

The play is for points, which are earned for blasting each wall section. Players earn Bonus Star Cruisers for blasting the Energy Cannon. Each time an Energy Cannon is destroyed, the game begins again, with a faster and more aggressive Energy Cannon and Energy Bombs. Two players may either take turns or, with an optional additional control panel, play simultaneously, both chipping away at the Energy Cannon's defenses at the same time. The game may be begun at two different skill levels, and ends when all the players' Star Fighters are lost.

OPINIONS:

MIKE: All I can say about this game is that it is **STAR CASTLE**, complete with everything the arcade game had, except the color display and large stand-up screen. Both of these lacks are minor, however, since the overlay adds a lot of color to the screen and few gamers have room for full-size arcade machines in their living rooms.

I liked **STAR CASTLE** in the arcade and I really like this version for the home. The play is quick and the four Vectrex buttons respond just as well as the ones in the arcade version did. Go to an arcade and find this game, if you are at all in doubt and it is still available for play in one near you. If you like it there -- get it for your Vectrex.

Then again, ■ full-size arcade machine with this game on it wouldn't be all that bad, but I doubt that you will ever buy it for the same price as a Vectrex cartridge. Go get it.

ALAN: This is simple space action, hard and fast. The game itself plays a lot like Fox's **SPACEMASTER X-7**, for the VCS, reviewed last month. The differences here are the graphics, which are rendered in vector display, and the Energy Cannon itself, with three shields to blast through. There are only the Fire Bombs and Energy Bombs to contend with, too, instead of the several different kinds of alien attackers that were present in the Fox VCS game, but the cannon and bombs are enough, believe me!

STAR CASTLE is a serious arcade challenge -- the kind the Vectrex system seems to excel in. It ought to keep most space action gamers blasting away for hours. Very true to the arcade original, but possibly even a bit tougher to play, it's ■ good buy in my book.

RATINGS:

Concept: Familiar
Graphics/Sound: Excellent
**Difficulty:** Graduate
Interest: One Year

-- HOW THEY ALL STACKED UP --

The following is a list of all the games reiewed this issue, grouped according to our reviewers' combined opinions. Mike and Alan both liked the games next to the shooting rocket. Games with a horozontal rocket were only liked by one of our reviewers. Games with the crashed rocket didn't appeal to either of our reviwers.
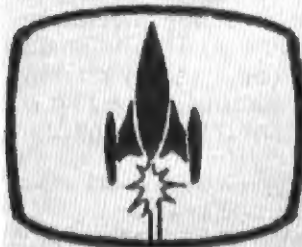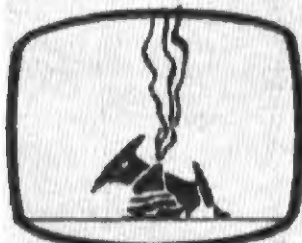

MIKE AND ALAN BOTH LIKED:

POLE POSITION * VCS MINER 2049er
FROGGER (5200 & SuperCharger)
Q*BERT (VCS, Intellivision, Coleco)
THE DREADNAUGHT FACTOR
SAFECRACKER * STAR CASTLE
SUPER ACTION BASEBALL
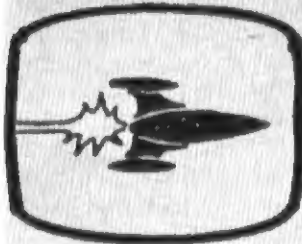
ALAN LIKED — MIKE DIDN'T:

TUTANKHAM * BLUEPRINT * MR. DO!
RABBIT TRANSIT

MIKE AND ALAN DIDN'T LIKE:

SOLAR STORM * SUPER COBRA
MOGUL MANIAC

PATRICK RANSIL...
(Continued from Page 7)

called THE NUMB THUMB NEWS. How can our readers subscribe to it?

PAT: They can send $3.50 check or money order, (no cash, please) to:

IMAGIC Numb Thumb Club
P.O. Box 208
Santa Clara, CA 95052

LG: Does IMAGIC sell their games in foreign countries?

PAT: Oh yes! Even though the marketing is very different than it is here in the States, we are operating in 40 different countries. We are expecting 10 to 20% of our sales this year will be international.

LG: What are the future plans for IMAGIC?

PAT: We will be doing more adventure and educational games, with higher capability that will appeal to an older audience. We will be getting into more computer games and the more powerful systems. IMAGIC provides high quality, high volume software for computer systems. As home computers become more popular, a :eed arises for other types of software. IMAGIC wants to provide that software.

LG: How about yourself, Pat? What are your hobbies?

PAT: Oh, I enjoy a lot of outdoor activities like tennis, running, boating, backpacking and skiing. I really enjoy the ocean as a place to go. It soothes me to watch the waves and the seagulls when I'm frazzled. That's where I can go and just relax.

LG: What's in _your_ personal future?

PAT: One thing I would really like to do is to take flying lessons. I'm going to

do that one of these days. Also, a very strong personal interest of mine is in using computers in medical research. Before I started with IMAGIC, I almost went back to school to get a degree in bio-medical research. I may still do that some day.

In addition to the video games mentioned in this interview, IMAGIC also produces these titles: DRAGONFIRE, NO ESCAPE!, SHOOTIN' GALLERY, DRACULA, NOVA BLAST, ICE TREK, TROPICAL TROUBLE, SAFE-CRACKER, WHITE WATER, SOLAR STORM, MOONSWEEPER, FATHOM, BEEZER, RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX, COSMIC ARK, FIRE FIGHTER, STAR VOYAGER, TRICK SHOT, BEAUTY & THE BEAST and WING WAR.

---

micro quips

MINI-REVIEWS FROM OUR READERS

$10 WINNER!!!

FOR THE VCS:
REALSPORTS TENNIS: Excellent graphics, right down to the shadow of the ball. On this game you control every shot, angle and position. You can play alone, or against the computer. **REAL SPORTS TENNIS** is a very enjoyable game to play, as well as to watch.

FLASH GORDON: Good graphics - boring game. The situation constantly remains the same, and the playfield is slightly more than half the screen. This game is easy to master, and a good player will tire of it quickly.

BANK HEIST: Very good graphics - fun to play. The object of this game is to travel through towns robbing banks, while dodging and destroying police cars. If you like the idea, get the game.
---**Amy Gillett**
Wilton, CT

Mattel's **GOLF:** All the enjoyment and situations of the real game, without losing your monogrammed golf balls.

Mattel's **ROYAL DEALER:** Excellent recreation of the prototypes - Rummy, Hearts and Crazy Eights. Those computer ladies really know how to play their cards. But, _too_ fast! Glad it's just for fun, girls!
---**William Hartman**
Valley Stream, NY

FOR INTELLIVISION:
MISSION X: Not nearly as good as B-17 BOMBER, with very disappointing graphics. Don't waste your money.

BUZZ BOMBERS: Mattel has done it again. A fast-paced game with plenty of action. The progression of cartoons after the completion of every five screens is very cute. Hint -- when down to your last bee, allow the humming

bird to eat all the honey combs before shooting the final bee, but watch out for flowers!

MICROSURGEON, by Imagic: Very colorful graphics, interesting concept. Easy to master if you use both controllers at the same time.
---**John Renn**
Waycross, GA

FOR THE VCS:
M-Network BURGERTIME: Steer clear; this is a very poor translation of the superb Intellivision version (extremely slow).

FOR INTELLIVISION:
Activision's **DREADNAUGHT FACTOR:** A fast-paced "shoot-em-up" in which your Novaray Hyperfighter is pitted against up to 100 Zorban Dreadnaughts. The jump from intermediate level to Challenge level will take a few colorful destructions of your home planet Terra. Can become a bit frustrating after your second Dreadnaught.

Mattel's **USCF CHESS:** A superb effort which unfortunately will probably never be recognized on the level that it deserves. There's nothing that will motivate you to improve your Chess game any more than being annihilated by an Intellivision.
---**Anthony Wyatt**
Apex, NC

Dear Logical Gamer:
A few months ago, I sent $6 to the ColecoVision club and I still haven't heard anything from them. I don't even think my check was cashed yet! The address I sent to wasn't the one in your trading post and the cost was $6, not $10, like in your trading post ad. What gives? Which ColecoVision club and address is the right one?

---**Jeff Silva**
Tacoma, WA

((You sent your money to the right address for the OFFICIAL ColecoVision club. Several problems, including an unexpected demand and big changes in Coleco's production plans, have forced the folks who produce the ColecoVision Club magazine to have to go back and re-do a couple of issues, delaying things a lot. You are probably in the club by the time you are reading this, however. The other club is run by a private individual who was, it was later discovered, using the ColecoVision name without authorization, for a private group he was forming on his own.))

Dear Logical Gamer,
You mentioned in your June issue that Amiga was coming out with a memory expander for the Atari VCS.
Will the cassette tapes from Amiga work on the Starpath SuperCharger and vice-versa? Will there be other software for Starpath or Amiga?

---**A Logical Gamer**
Port Washington, WI

((It's not clear exactly what happened to the two new memory expanders that were announced in that issue, but Amiga is still supposed to be bringing out such a unit, with a built-in modem for hook-up to any telephone, allowing two players to participate in the same game, across town or across the country. It is very doubtful that it will be compatible with Starpath's SuperCharger. Starpath already has nine games available for their SuperCharger and Amiga plans several for theirs, though we haven't heard anything about it lately. We'll be sure to pass on more news about these as it becomes available.))

Sirs:
I was most interested in your article concerning Coleco's Expansion Module #1 (games that will and won't work in it) that ran in your May issue. It should also be noted that only games that use joysticks can be played in the #1 Module -- paddle games will not work.
As for Coleco's ADAM - sounds too good to be true. After reading your review of ADAM, I was smiling from ear to ear. This computer I will own.
I recently purchased 20th Century Fox's **BANK HEIST**, which, I think, is the same game you referred to in an earlier report as **HOLDUP**. Banks are robbed, cops chase robbers, etc., etc. A very good maze game at lower levels. Higher levels are almost impossible to play without getting frustrated.

---**Harry A. Snyder**
Williamsport, PA

((Keep in mind that what you've read so far about the ADAM computer is not a review, but only press releases and news about what is to come. We're hoping to get a system to review in time for our next issue, so stay tuned for the whole scoop then. Meanwhile, thanks for the tip on paddle games for the expansion module, and for the words on **BANK HEIST**. Fox hasn't been cooperating with us too well lately, so we hadn't seen that one yet. Hope to get the mix-up straightened out soon.))

KEEP THOSE CARDS AND LETTERS COMING! WE CAN'T ANSWER EVERY LETTER WE GET, BUT WE TRY -- AND WE PUBLISH THE BEST.

THE WINNER!!!

Many thanks to all the readers who entered our little "Video QIX Puzzle" contest a couple of months ago. We had so many entries we decided to draw five "semi-finalists." If the semi-finalists had solved the puzzle correctly, they were then entered into the final drawing. And -- the name we pulled out of the hat was Pat Holden, whose correct winning entry, postmarked August 3, 1983, won the prize. Congratulations, Pat! Your free Vectrex Graphic Computer system is on its way, and should reach you soon, if not already! Space limitations this month have prevented us from printing the winning entry, but we'll be sure to print the solution in our next issue.

Many thanks, also, to all of you who pointed out the fact that the puzzle could also be solved using only two lines. In truth, there were several possible solutions to this puzzle, and we considered all entries that grouped all the points and monsters separately, as long as they used three horizontal or vertical lines or less.

We've got another puzzle contest coming up next month. Be here or you'll miss all the fun!

THE TRADING POST

ADVERTISE IN THE LOGICAL GAMER'S "Trading Post" classified advertising section and reach 5-10,000 of the most dedicated, interested and proven mail-order video game buyers and retailers in the country -- for **Only 20 cents per word (only 10 cents per word for subscribers)**! Trade games, contact other video gamers, sell your products -- whatever. The first three words are printed in boldface at no extra charge -- additional words boldfaced for an additional 10 cents each. Zip codes are free. Minimum order: 15 words. Send check or money order with your ad copy (typewritten please!) and include your name, address and phone number. Also include your address code if applying for the 1/2-price subscriber rate. Ads received by the 15th go in the next month's issue. Mail To: **LOGICAL GAMER TRADING POST, 8125 S.W. 21st Street, Topeka, KS 66615.**

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